

SOCCER

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GST INCLUSIVE

NSL TO CLUBS: PAY UP OR BE STRIPPED OF POINTS

By **Brendon Davis**

Twelve of the thirteen National League clubs owe money to the NSL and those clubs still in default come the 27th of December will be ineligible for Premiership points.

That's the view held by newly elected chairman Remo Ngorotto and it is possible that those NSL clubs with unpaid debts as of the first of January will be denied access to new players during the January transfer period.

Ngorotto spent much of his first week in office coming to terms with the finances of Soccer Australia where he discovered some interesting trends centering on the majority of National League sides.

He found all but one team in this year's draw owed Soccer Australia substantial amounts of money pertaining to their appearance in the competition, debts crippling the current condition of the governing body.

Under the new proposals therefore, any clubs in default on payments to the NSL would be permitted to participate in the competition, play their NSL fixtures, but ineligible to accumulate any competition points until their debt was repaid.

Currently Newcastle United and Perth Glory are believed to owe the governing body the broad figure of \$20 000 respectively; sums labelled "insignificant" by a leading soccer official, while Parramatta

and Marconi are believed to owe "manageable amounts," the source added.

The worst culprits are said to be Sydney United and the Olympic Sharks, whose combined debt to SA comfortably exceeds \$300 000. The Melbourne Knights debt is around the \$30 000 mark but according to John Ovcacic, the Knights can meet any of the obligations put down by Soccer Australia.

At last week's NSL meeting the Olympic Sharks justified their non-payment by suggesting they would not pay their debts in case Soccer Australia went into administration. However NSL sources dismissed Olympic's position as sheer nonsense as any administrator would immediately issue proceedings to recover any monies owed to the company.

"It's disgusting [Sydney] Olympic are being subsidised by the rest of us. They are using NSL money to meet their massive payroll," one official told ABSW.

For Sydney United meanwhile, their financial plight has been well documented with their coach Branko Culina taking a pay cut during the season to enable the club to meet its financial commitments to its players. It is also believed that United would have tremendous difficulty raising the required revenue between now and Christmas.

Perth Glory have little liability to the NSL so they will continue to accumulate competition points. Their situation how-

ever is still not clear, as they are still to face an NSL investigation into the playing of an unregistered player in the opening round of this season's competition, that may result in the West Australian club losing the three points won from that match.

From those officials available for comment, South Melbourne President Peter Mitras explained that his club's obligations to the NSL had been paid up and that they fully endorsed the Ngorotto's proposals.

It was only last year that South were forced to slash their playing budget for this season, so having done this the feeling at Lakeside is that it is unreasonable for other clubs to have an onfield advantage by using monies owed to the NSL to boost their playing budgets.

ABSW were informed prior to going to print that the directors of Soccer Australia face a statutory responsibility to rigidly pursue and recover any and all the debts owing to SA irrespective of the consequences and any failure to reign in these debts may result in individual directions being found guilty of offences themselves.

Further, it was revealed that any directors of an entity (the individual NSL clubs) that allow their club to continue trading while insolvent would be exposing themselves to personal liability.

Soccer Australia chairman Remo Ngorotto was unavailable for comment at the time of press.

BLATTER AND CO MUST COMMIT TO OCEANIA

Comment by **Daniel Kuziow**

Madrid. An epicentre of world football and home to European thoroughbred Real Madrid will this Wednesday host the single most important convention in the history of the Oceania Football Confederation.

And it is in the Spanish capital that the FIFA executive will meet to decide the fate of Oceania for automatic qualification to the 2006 World Cup in Germany and beyond.

This decision is crucial for Oceania and Australia, for if soccer is to rise from the doldrums of obscurity and into the lofty heights of the status elite, the 24 member executive must vote in favour of the only confederation to have not yet been guaranteed passage to the world's biggest sporting event.

Oceania have not had a World Cup representative since New Zealand travelled to Spain to contest the 1982 finals and in the 20 years since, Oceania's success and exposure on a global stage have been extremely limited.

As a sporting public we left distraught after arduous qualification campaigns lead to the disastrous losses of Iran in 1997 and Uruguay in 2001 and we have all been waiting for the winds of change.

Our own national competition is in dire straits having failed to secure a media partner. Sponsorship and spectator numbers are at record lows and many clubs are on the precipice of falling from grace, while potentially huge matches against nations such as Italy, Argentina and other experienced footballing nations have had to be scrapped owing to the poor financial situation of Soccer Australia.

Currently Oceania is the confederation of least importance in world soccer. FIFA must therefore guarantee automatic qualification if the game in this region is to survive.

Their approval would propel the Oceania region into the realm of legitimacy and with the benefits of several million dollars in funding, corporate sponsorship and investment and the added potential to stage fixtures and competitions rivalling the best anywhere in the world.

This week's Madrid verdict holds within it a shining light on an otherwise bleak horizon.

Let's hope the eight votes from UEFA, the four from Asia and Africa respectively, the three from CONCACAF, the one from South America and the one from FIFA President Sepp Blatter will be enough to secure the future of the Oceania Football Confederation.

NEW SOUTH WALES UNITED

By **Mark Stavroulakis**

In a crucial time where soccer in Australia has suffered rather critically with recent events that have put the game down, last Saturday afternoon heralded some good news that drifted from the NSW Soccer headquarters in Parklea.

After 12-years of debate, the proposed unification between the NSW Soccer Federation (NSWSF) & the NSW Amateur Soccer Federation (NSWASF)

became a reality last week when members from both organizations voted unanimously to form SOCCER NSW.

This exciting and historic merger of both parties has opened the doors for soccer in NSW to proceed as one body in its dealings with associations and clubs, government organizations and the corporate community.

NSW has always been renowned as a step above the rest of all other federations, now with the two aligning as one, there's no stopping the new SOCCER NSW venture who hope to bring new things to the game of football in this state.

President of the newly formed SOCCER NSW committee Tom Doumanis told

ABSW exclusively that, "This has heralded a new beginning for the administration of soccer in this state. This brings together in excess of 180,000 participants working towards a common objective of developing and promoting the sport."

What NSW has achieved can be a model for other states to replicate in the ultimate result being a unified administrative structure

is a genuine partnership between two soccer bodies, the NSW Amateur Soccer Federation and the NSW Soccer Federation, with genuine power sharing equally between both former federations.

It is an example of unification at state level, which can only encourage the Crawford (Soccer) Inquiry in its work of reforming and restructuring the code in Australia. It can also act as a template for unification of the code in other states. If we can do it, others can also", Mr Forrest

concluded Elected to the new Board of Soccer NSW were Tom Doumanis (president and chair of the Council of Clubs), Jim Forrest (vice-president and chair of the Council of Associations), Ross Kelly, David Goodman, Jim Ronis, Rob Laws, Bobby Clark, Frank Wilson, Howard Bradley and Ray Tweedie.



Australia-wide under the banner of a reformed Soccer Australia, that could ultimately see that the potential of this sport in this country is being achieved."

New Vice-President of Soccer NSW Mr Jim Forrest stated that this venture would benefit the game at state and national level.

"What we have created is a pathway to the future. This



The new Soccer NSW Board

GOOD LUCK YOUNG SOCCEROOS

By **Daniel Kuziow**

Australia's return from the soccer wilderness is just around the corner with the Young Socceroos about to embark on the final leg of their qualification campaign for the World Youth Championships.

The tournament held in Dubai next year will be the first major competition played by Australia since the Socceroos

World Cup qualifying series of last year.

Australia has a proud record at this youth level and already Ange Postecoglou's side have disposed of Oceania rivals Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu. They now await

the winner of the other qualifying group to decide who will be Oceania's representative at next year's tournament

At the time of print the Young Socceroos' opponents were not known however the two sides that look

destined to become the Socceroos' final obstacle will be either New Zealand or Fiji.

In preparing for the Final, the Young Socceroos had a hit out against the VIS and cruised to a 5-1 victory. Standouts included captain Scott McDonald, Carl Valeri and David Tarka.

For more details please consult the Soccer Australia website at www.socceraustralia.com.au



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AUSSIES ABROAD

BY DANIEL KUZIW

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A week after scoring the crucial equaliser against Celtic in the Old Firm derby, Craig Moore has praised the efforts of teammate Arthur Numan for the moment of bravery that prevented the Australian from scoring for both sides in the match.

Moore beat goalkeeper Robert Douglas to a Fernando Ricksen corner to cancel out Chris Sutton's 19-second opener, but almost turned the ball into his own net when Martin O'Neill sent on Alan Thompson.

He inadvertently directed towards his own net until Numan bravely intervened at the far post at full stretch at the expense of a painful landing.

"It was a good chance wasn't it! I knew Thompson was going to cut it back so I was trying to read it but it didn't go back as far as I had thought and it came off my toe. I think Arthur did very well to clear the ball and

he took a knock for me as well so I had to thank him after the game," Moore told sport-inglife.com

The result took Rangers to the top of the table with a two-point advantage over their rivals with Moore adding: "I'm really pleased with the result, especially after the start we got off to."

"To come back from that was really pleasing. We were looking for all three points and we have managed to do that."

"It was one of my most enjoyable Old Firm games but, as for it being my best game, I don't really know."

Immediately after the match Rangers manager Alex McLeish was full of praise for the defender: "He was outstanding. He's really a threat in the opposition's box with his timing of runs and he climbs really well."

"And he was a really strong defender for us," McLeish added.

The equaliser was Moore's first Old Firm goal for Rangers, although he had previously put through his own goal in a 3-0 Celtic win at Hampden Park in the 1994-95 season.

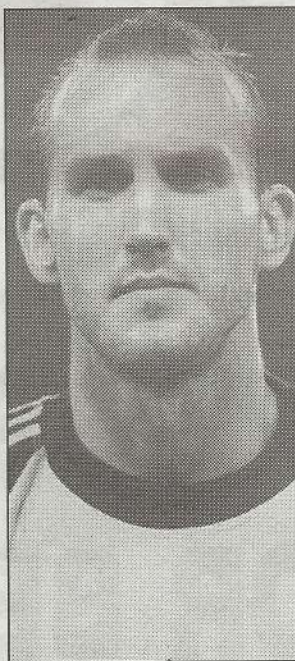
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Middlesbrough's Australian keeper Mark Schwarzer insisted his teammates should not feel downhearted by their recent results.

Boro were beaten 1-0 by newboys West Brom before Ugo Ehiogu's late header rescued a point at home to basement club West Ham on Saturday.

But Middlesbrough are still ninth in the table and Schwarzer, whose team face title-challengers Chelsea this weekend, said a draw was not a bad result.

"I would say that on [last] Saturday's performance, it was a point gained, not two



Mark Schwarzer: Rallying behind his Boro team despite some recent poor form.

dropped," Schwarzer told the club's official website.

"I thought beforehand that West Ham are not a side who deserve to be bottom of the table."

"The calibre of player they have means they should be in a better position."

"They need to turn things round pretty quickly and although they will be disappointed not to have taken three points, they have a point and the knowledge that in the first half it was they that looked like the home team."

"On the day and given the way we played, we were happy just to take a point. We could have lost that game, but in the end, it was a very hard fought one point for us."

Schwarzer added: "Credit to West Ham, they wouldn't let us play our game."

"We didn't play anywhere near as well as we can, but at times you can only play as well as the opposition let you, and we did come from behind twice."

●●●●

Middlesbrough's other Australian goalkeeper, Brad Jones, is back on track after early-season injuries threatened to stall his career.

Jones, 20, has set his sights on challenging Socceroo Mark Schwarzer and Welsh international Mark Crossley for a spot in Boro's first team - although he admits he's not in their class yet.

Jones, who joined Middlesbrough two years ago from Perth club Bayswater, has had two stints on the bench this season and says he has learnt a lot from his time in the squad.

"It was good to get another appearance on the bench and it's great experience for me to be part of the squad," Jones told the club website.

"The two of them (Schwarzer and Crossley) are good for me to look up to and see how far I can progress to become what they are."

"I'll be honest, at the moment I'm not quite there. But hopefully within the near future I'll reach their level."

"I was injured for a lot of the early part of this season but I feel I've come on well and things will keep getting better."

Jones kept a clean sheet for the Middlesbrough reserves team this week in a goalless draw against West Bromwich Albion, in which he was forced to make only one save.

"It's always nice to be able to have a save," he said.

"Unfortunately in the first half I didn't have one to make and I was freezing so it was nice to make one in the second half and feel I'd contributed to the team."

"Concentration is one of the hardest things for a keeper and normally the best keepers are the ones who keep concentrating for the full game."

●●●●

Last week AA reported that Ajax goalkeeper Joey Didulica had declared his allegiance to playing for Australia instead of Croatia.

However the Australian last week came out and said he would rather play for the European nation and thus rejecting the advances of the Soccerroos.

"I think I have a better chance to play for Croatia," said Didulica on planetfootball.com

With Croatia I would get more chance to play at a high level at qualifications, and then there is the World Cup and European Championships."

"You can't travel all over the world just to play one game in two or three months. This is very hard and very exhausting."

"This is sure one of the hardest decisions in my life, maybe

for now I will concentrate on playing for Ajax and take time to decide."

"A few months ago I was still in the Ajax B team and now there are two countries fighting for me."

"If I agree to play for Australia I will have to wait as Mark Schwarzer is the number one goalie."

"If I go to Croatia, I will also have to wait because of Stipe Pletikosa but he is only with Hadrjak Split and I play for a big club in Ajax, so I believe it would be easier for me to get a chance."

"Yes, I have an Australian passport but, to be honest, deep inside I feel Croat so I will decide by listening to my heart."

●●●●

Lillestrom have decided not to buy Moss's Australian midfielder Kasey Wehrman after initially declaring interest in the former glory player.



Kasey Wehrman: Will be remaining at Moss after Lillestrom decided against buying him.

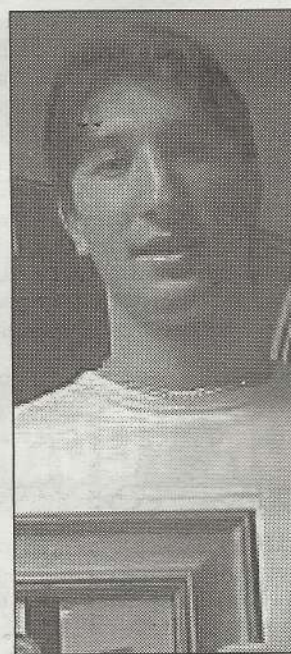
The 21-year-old had been looking to leave follow Moss's relegation.

However, Moss has prised him out of a move to Lillestrom and he will continue where he is, unless a transfer can be agreed.

"We can't promise that he will stay with us in the 2003 season," said Moss director Tore Jobs on planetfootball.com

"Just now there are no other clubs that have an interest. But there might be some now that Lillestrom have decided not to buy."

"We will not offer him to other clubs, it's the clubs that have to come to us if they are interested."



Joe Didulica: This week came out and backed a move to represent Croatia rather than Australia.

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Basil confident Oceania will get the nod

OCEANIA soccer chief Basil Scarsella is confident he's just days away from securing a virtual walk-up start for Australia to the 2006 World Cup.

After two years pushing for automatic inclusion for Oceania, Scarsella arrives in Madrid on Saturday for some final lobbying before FIFA's executive committee meets on Tuesday to discuss the makeup of the 32-team tournament in Germany.

"I'm quietly confident, not overly confident," said the president of the Oceania Football Confederation and former Soccer Australia chairman.

"This is a right, it's not a handout. We're the only confederation which doesn't get regular representation at the World Cup and we should."

But Oceania is also the only one of FIFA's six confederations which does not have a team ranked in the top 40.

Australia is currently at 47, New Zealand 48 and the next of the other nine minnows in the group is Tahiti way back at 114.

In the past, Oceania's champion has had to play a lowly ranked team from a stronger confederation in a play-off to make the World Cup finals.

After thrashing the likes of Vanuatu, Fiji and the Cook Islands in the last three Oceania qualifying series, Australia has then fallen at the last hurdle to the fifth best team from South America (Argentina, 1994), the fourth ranked team from Asia (Iran, 1998) and again South America's fifth team (Uruguay, 2002).

Oceania has only been represented at the World Cup finals twice - Australia in 1974 and New Zealand in

1982 - but Scarsella believed the region deserved to have a guaranteed berth.

Significantly, Oceania has the support of FIFA president Sepp Blatter after backing him in his re-election this year.

Blatter's tacit support and casting vote could be crucial with Europe having eight votes, Asia and Africa four each, three each for South America (CONMEBOL) and North and Central America and the Caribbean (CONCACAF) and one for Oceania.

CONMEBOL president Nicolas Leoz has already scoffed at ideas Oceania deserved a guaranteed place and said his region should have five, rather than four and a half, berths.

Asia may want to increase its quota from four to five after the success of Korea and Japan this year while Africa will not accept anything less than the five places it had in 2002.

CONCACAF had only three places, so the most likely sacrifice would come from Europe which had 15 teams at this year's tournament.

Scarsella was hopeful, however, that a vote would not be necessary.

"Often it's consensus and it doesn't have to go to a vote. The confederations don't always do things just for their self interests, it is often in the best interests of the game," he said.

"This has been going on for two and half years but you always keep pushing until the last minute. Hopefully common sense will prevail."

Not all Australians believe an automatic Oceania berth is common sense, though.



Basil Scarsella: OFC President.

Remo ready for anything

Soccer Australia chairman Remo Nogarotto is prepared to accept the collapse of the existing board if recommended by the government inquiry and has questioned the PFA's planned model for a new national league.

Speaking on SBS' TheWorldGame program, Nogarotto rejected the notion he is working in a 'caretaker' role in anticipation of a major shake-up of the governing body and its management of the game as a result of the Australian Sports Commission review.

"I see this as a significant responsibility in terms of getting the ship back on an even keel," he said. "Steering it through the government inquiry. Ensuring that the climate against which the recommendations are finally debated and accepted by the stakeholders is one devoid of politics."

"And then if necessary, absolutely, collapsing the current board structure and allowing the game to develop a new corporate structure. I don't have any diffi-

culty with that."

In admitting that he has plenty of work to do to get Soccer Australia back on track, Nogarotto insists its imperative that the governing body improve its image, especially in relation to Oceania's quest for direct qualification.

"Clearly we've got a significant milestone to be reached and passed on the 18th of December," Nogarotto said. "I think we need to ensure that our corporate governance and our public behaviour doesn't offer any excuse to anyone within FIFA to deny Oceania the right of direct qualification."

While it might be a little late to change FIFA's perceptions of the problems within Australia and despite admitting that qualifying through Asia does have its advantages, Nogarotto is banking on Oceania earning direct qualification.

"It depends whether you're a football purist or a commercial realist," he said. "At the moment I'm a commercial realist."

"It's not just the money. It's an

opportunity to build the game on a solid foundation in this country."

"I accept the purists view that it would be preferable that we battle it through (Asia). There is a legitimate argument there as well that the group games will be significant revenue earners for the federation."

"I think on the balance though, offered the opportunity of direct qualification, Oceania that is, we should embrace it and we should take it."

On the state of the local game, Nogarotto, while admitting that the NSL is unsustainable in its current format where the 13 clubs are collectively losing around \$18 million per season, he warned that the Professional Football Association's planned Australian Premier League was not a clear cut solution.

"Firstly, you can't quibble with the research," he said of the reported \$300,000 forked out by the PFA on research. "The game has lacked a level of science underpinning the decisions that it makes."

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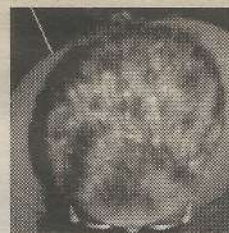
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Steve James



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Reddy, Willing and Able

By Daniel Kuziow

Sport has a long and proud history of making sacred a surname and etching it into the traditions and folklore of competition. Sport also carries the unique quality of allowing this name to survive long after a player has hung up their boots for the final time.

Many sporting fans would already be well familiar with the surname Reddy with Rod Reddy having starred as a rugby league player some years back. This name nevertheless continues to shine in sporting circles with 21-year-old Liam Reddy following in the footsteps of his once famous father.

Yet unlike taking an identical path and choosing the game of Rugby League, Reddy moved towards the game of soccer where he is currently starring as goalkeeper for National Soccer League side the Parramatta Power.

Having last season played second fiddle to Les Pogliacomi; the former AIS graduate has taken on the challenges of first team football and established himself as the number one shot stopper at the club.

Speaking on the current form of himself and teammates, Reddy confessed; "We have been playing well but have not been getting some of the results. We just need to score some goals like we did when we scored three against Sydney United. At the moment though, the mood in the camp is pretty good."

"[As for myself] I have regrouped since the episode

against the Olympic Sharks match and have moved on by concentrating on playing soccer and I am quite happy with the way things have gone. The club and fans have been very good and it has all been dealt and we have all just got on with everything and it's all in the past," he added.

Since returning to the starting line up, Reddy has found himself a product of the current nature of the National League. The various coaches have promoted scores of youngsters eager to leave their mark on the game and already the competition has been taken over by the fresh goalkeeping talents of Reddy, Eugene Galekovic and David Scarsella.

Such a move is the ideal way of



Liam Reddy: The number one goalkeeper at the power this season.

bringing forth the soccer talents of the next generation with Reddy saying; "It definitely increases the exposure of these players and helps them get a name and you have to be playing National League if you are to have any

chance of playing in any Australian side from the under 20's to the Olyroos."

Reddy credits the coaching staff of the Power as having a substantial influence on his coming of age this season as a player. He is in particular praise of the tutoring of goalkeeping coach Jim Fraser who has moved to steadily improve the game of his student.

"I have got Jim Fraser helping me as goalkeeper coach. He has been the best thing for me so far and he has helped me tremendously with my game."

With last week's match against the Northern Spirit postponed due to the North Sydney side having a large number of players on international duty, the Power will face the Wollongong Wolves in a week's time to complete the first round of matches. For Reddy, the upcoming matches are a perfect opportunity for his side to reassert themselves in the run in for the finals series.

"Things are not looking too bad at the moment. Brad Maloney has come back from injury and things are starting to gel in the midfield with him and obviously we will have to improve on our second half of the season but I don't see why we won't."

"Personally I know we will get into the six and every other player in the squad has the ambition of making the six. We just have to get a couple of wins together and go from there. With the new semi-finals format, once you get into the six then anything can happen. It's a whole new competition," he concluded.

MALONEY POWERS ON FOR PARRAMATTA

By Mark Stavroulakis

Amidst all the problems National League side Parramatta Power have endured this season, coach Nick Theodorakopoulos was one relieved man when he heard the news that star midfielder player and new off-season buy Brad Maloney had gained full-fitness and was back to his devastating best.

The 30-year-old former Perth Glory star had battled through a tough start to the year spending ten-weeks on the sidelines with an ankle injury.

Asked about how the injury was going Maloney replied, "It's 100 % now, it took a long time to get it right. Nick didn't want to rush me back into the squad, he was very patient with me and he's showed a lot of faith in me I just want to repay him with good performances on the pitch."

Enter the Round 12 clash with fierce rivals Sydney United, Maloney produced a five-star performance and also got himself on the scoresheet in a match that saw the Power gain the much-needed three points.

"It's great to be back playing first grade football again. It's been a frustrating time up until now where obviously I would have loved to have been available for selection but things didn't really work out the way we planned. The injury took longer than what we first expected, but now that I'm back out there I couldn't be happier. That's what we work so hard for to get out there and play on the weekend and was even more pleased at the fact that we got a home win in front of our own crowd."

Having had their Round 13 match against the Spirit cancelled due to international commitments on Lawrie McKinna's men, the Power

had a tough week at training under the watchful eyes of coach Nick T and Assistant Manfred Schaefer

Still riding high on their three-nil victory over rivals Sydney United, the Power could receive an extra boost with three points possibly making its way to Parramatta if Perth Glory are found guilty of fielding an unregistered player (Andre Gumprecht) in the first round clash between the two.

"We as the club aren't relying on those points against the Glory but it would certainly be a bonus for us. The result against United could maybe be the turn around of the year for us. The whole team has played reasonably well without much luck and I don't think our position on the table is a true sign of how the team's been going. I think we've got a lot more potential than what a lot of people suggest but hopefully we do turn the corner with that win against United under our belts, we will try our best in gaining better results."

Having represented the Socceroos



Brad Maloney: Fit, free of injury and raring to go with the Power this season.

nine times and playing well-over 280 National League matches in his career so far, Brad has focused on having a big season with his new club hoping to hit the top six spot, something the club has yet to do since its introduction into the NSL in '99.

"One of the main reasons why I joined the Power was to be with a successful club and a business organization and that's exactly what Parramatta are, and to date they haven't quite fulfilled certain expectations because they've failed to finish in the top six up until this year. One of the main goals I set myself was to be part of a team that will make the top six and hopefully we can do this and maybe get a championship."

It's been no secret that the Power have had their fair share in problems not just result wise but off the park, the wealthy leagues club has stated that it will not continue its commitment towards funding the Power beyond the end of next season casting doubt on players careers in the game here in Australia.

The powerful midfielder believes that even with this saga currently surfacing itself at the club, the players have stayed calm and want to get on with the job ahead of them and that's gaining a top six spot.

"This was obviously a business decision made by the league's club itself but as far as the players are concerned I don't think it should bother us either way. We've all got a job to do - we're professional players that are employed by the leagues club and we're quite happy we fulfil those commitments with the club. We just want to achieve the best that we can on the park - i.e. getting into the top six and winning the championship. Overall though we hope that things might continue on with the Parramatta Leagues Club. I think it's healthy for the National League that the Parramatta Power continue."

Coach Claims 'No way back for Feyenoord's Holman'

South Melbourne coach Danny Wright says Brett Holman will regret pulling out of the Australia U20 squad for the rest of his life.

Holman is playing first team football at Excelsior, on loan from Feyenoord, and turned down a call-up to the Australia squad for last week's World Cup qualifiers in Vanuatu.

Wright branded his decision as "idiotic" and told the Herald-Sun, "He's going to regret it for the rest of his life."

There doesn't appear a way back for Holman, particularly with Australia's depth in attack at U20 level.

After last week's 6-0 thumping



South Melbourne coach Danny Wright has stated that Brett Holman's decision to not play for the U20's has damaged his future Australian aspirations.

of Papua New Guinea, coach Ange Postecoglou also said, "There are three or four others who are still in consideration and a lot will depend on their form."

"But it's the end of the road for Brett, for sure."

"I've said all along that if anyone knocks back the initial invite, they won't be considered for the rest of the campaign."

He added, "Scott (McDonald of Southampton) has looked lively in both games and he's looking good up front with

Alex (Brosque).

"As far as the third striking spot, it's still open with Michael Baird, Nick Tsiorlas and Franco Parisi."

Terminator Ready to Rumble

By Allan Crisp

David Terminello has been nicknamed the "Terminator" by teammates and fans, not because of any similarity to the Arnold Schwarzenegger violence prone robot movie character, but simply because of his surname.

Terminello, the Adelaide City Force midfielder, is not especially aggressive towards his opponents on the pitch his forte being skill, speed and a burning desire to succeed at the highest level of his chosen sport.

Widely experienced for a 22-year old, Terminello has been slow in reaching his NSL 50th game milestone, but there have been extenuating circumstances.

He broke a foot bone twice and suffered a bout of glandular fever enduring massive set-backs to his career that cost him around 18 months on the sidelines.

His first club was eastern suburbs Campbelltown City where his eye-catching form earned him a scholarship with the South Australian Sports Institute and eventually selection in the Australian Under 17 squad. Terminello continued the spiral when he was picked up by Adelaide City in the 1998/99 season.

Then came the Carlton experiment that Terminello regarded as a

great learning experience under the coaching of former Scottish professional Stuart Munro.

"Carlton had a terrific squad then and I was bitterly disappointed when the club folded," Terminello said.

In its first season Carlton,



David Terminello: Hoping to put his bad run of injuries beside him with a good season at the Force this year.

Terminello, who was chosen in the starting line up for the round two fixture against Melbourne Knights, but had to wait until the round 12 game against Wollongong Wolves for his second run-on match.

"We had a bye in the first round and our first game was the 1-1 draw with the Knights at Hindmarsh Stadium," Terminello recalled.

"We have a deep squad this season and that keeps everyone on their toes and doing their best to impress at training."

"What I appreciate and I know the other younger players also like is the help and advice that our more experienced players give to us."

As for the obvious ambition to play for the Socceroos, Terminello is guardedly optimistic, saying, "Playing for Australia at senior level is far away on my wish list, but you should never say never."

City coach Charley Villani praised the work ethic of Terminello, declaring, "Dave has made fine progress in coming back after such a rotten run. He works hard at training and is pushing to be a regular in the first team."

Meanwhile, a change of luck would be greatly appreciated by the talented young player, who is not robotic like Schwarzenegger's "Terminator," but a smooth moving, mobile midfielder.

KINGZ SIGN ANOTHER SOUTH AMERICAN

New Football Kingz signing Mauro Donoso has had his path to the first team cleared after two more defenders quit the club this week.

Following Paul Dempsey out of the Kingz are Nick Haig and John Foundoulakis, who were both on three-month deals. "Nick was

unhappy at not getting any football," Kingz chief Chris Turner told the NZ Herald. "He felt he had more chance of playing by returning to the States."

Foundoulakis has flown back to Greece after asking to be released. Meanwhile, Donoso, who signed for the Kingz last week from Chile's Audax Italiano has been

busily training with his teammates last week.

Signs are more than evident that Donoso will be yet another South American star to watch out for in the National League this season.

Donoso has joined fellow South American Patricio Almendra at the club.

INQUIRY LIKELY TO CONSIDER NSL'S FUTURE

The federal government inquiry into soccer is set to have the final say on whether to save the ailing NSL or start a brand new national competition from the ground up.

A Soccer Australia blueprint to save the NSL found its way into the public arena, just a fortnight after the soccer players' union revealed plans for a 10-team Australian Premier League.

The SA strategy leaked to media sets out plans for a 14 or 16-team competition with promotion and relegation, \$1 million prize money and a berth in an Asian Champions League for the winner.

The major differences are that the SA plan would start next season as opposed to a 2004 kick-off for the APL, while the existing 13 NSL clubs would remain under the SA plan but most would get the chop from the invitation-only APL.

The decision as to which option is the best way forward will fall to the federal government's Crawford Inquiry.

The review of how Australian soccer is run is currently working through submissions and is due to table its recommendations in the middle of next year.

"I think an important distinction to make is whether the game's objective is to save the NSL or create a proper premier competition to engage the fans' interest," players' union boss Brendan Schwab said.

"We are absolutely committed to the latter

approach.

"Unless we give the fans what they want, it's going to fail in the marketplace.

"We've got to stop talking about tinkering with the NSL and take a clean piece of paper approach to reform."

The NSL has been hamstrung by a lack of television coverage this season as the Seven Network, which holds the rights for the league, refuses to show it.

All 13 clubs are losing money as attendances continue to dwindle and the league limps on without a major sponsor.



PFA Chief Executive
Brendan Schwab.

Parramatta Eagles Cement Man U Commitment

The Parramatta Eagles Soccer Academy (PESA) produced more evidence of its intent to become the premier Australian Football Nursery when it staged its inaugural Dinner Dance and Auction Evening.

A successful event at the Parramatta Leagues Club raised in excess of \$30,000 to

entertain the audience at the sell-out event, with tales of past Socceroo glories and some forthright opinions on future directions for soccer in Australia.

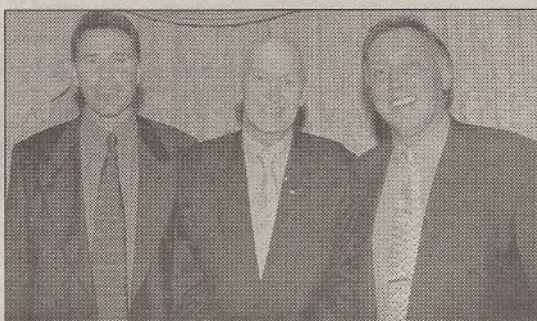
Thompson had left the Socceroos on a sound financial footing after a narrow World Cup loss to Maradona inspired Argentina, and was saddened at the current plight of ASF. However Thomo

graphed David Beckham book. In all the United items raised in excess of \$15,000 due to some competitive bidding.

The star auction items on the night, however, were a Cathy Freeman Nike Running shoe and one happy collector bought what he considered to be the bargain of the night, a Lleyton Hewitt tennis shirt.

Chairman Don Allan was pleased with the outcome of the night which was well supported by parents, coaching staff and Manchester United supporters groups.

Mr Allan added that the funds raised would allow the academy to pursue its objectives for the coming year to the benefit of the academy's young players.



(L - R) Don Allan (PESA Chairman), Eddie Thompson (Ex National Coach), and John Curran (PESA Chief Scout).

fund future initiatives in the next twelve months.

Special guests for the evening included former Socceroo coach Eddie Thompson, current National team Goal Keeping coach Jim Fraser, the Lord Mayor of Parramatta Paul Garrard, Parramatta Eagles officials and members of the Parra Power Soccer Club.

Former Socceroo Paul Wade was to be the auctioneer but had to undergo surgery at short notice. All in attendance wished Wade a speedy recovery.

Thompson and Fraser

was in favour of Manchester United's involvement in PESA and praised Academy Chairman Don Allan for taking the initiative to try and improve junior elite youth football development.

Whilst Manchester United have agreed to a five year partnership the Eagles Academy felt extra fund raising would enable it to expand its facilities and subsidise overseas tours.

United donated seven items including autographed jerseys of Rio Ferdinand and Ruud Van Nistelrooy, signed soccer balls, and an auto-



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FIJI STUNS NEW ZEALAND AT UNDER 20 OCEANIA QUALIFIERS

New Zealand has been upset 1-0 by Fiji in a vital Group B match at the OFC U-20 Qualifying Tournament.

In front of a sizeable home crowd of 2000 at Govind Park, Ba, Fijian striker Osea Vakatalesau scored the winner midway through the second half.

Both teams went into the half-time break nil all, but more importantly, the home team was playing with confidence buoyed by a vocal crowd who sensed a potential victory.

The match was played in sweltering conditions in the mid-afternoon heat with New Zealand only making their first substitution once Vakatalesau had scored.

The match was a typically tough encounter with five cautions dished out illustrating the significance and importance of the occasion.

Both teams went into the Group B showdown undefeated. At stake was a berth in the playoff final against Group A winners Australia.

The winner of that home and away series playoff will represent Oceania at the 2003 World Youth Championships in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

New Zealand still holds a slim chance of advancing should Fiji lose to Samoa and end up with an inferior goal difference to the Kiwis. Currently, New Zealand heads Fiji by a six goal margin in the overall



Les Scheinflug Fiji National Coach.

points for and against.

Fiji is heavily favoured to beat Samoa, but after the Samoans took New Zealand

to the brink in round two, that outcome is not as straight forward as many think.

GRELLA'S SILENT WAIT

Socceroos hopeful Vince Grella revealed that he is still waiting to hear from national coach Frank Farina about his chances of being selected for February's much-anticipated friendly against England.

A month ago Farina declared that the hard-working midfielder was the "revelation of all the Australian players in Europe so far" and well in the frame for a call-up.

Yet Grella, who is a regular starter for Serie A side Empoli this season, is no closer to knowing if he will be given the opportunity to add to his three senior caps.

"I haven't had any contact from the Socceroos at all," Grella told tribalfutbol.com.

He added: "I'd love to play for my country and if they want me, they know where to find me.

"I'm proud to represent my country and the opportunity to take on England on English soil is mouth-watering."



The 23-year-old represented Australia twice at the World Youth Championships (1997 &

1999) and was a key member of the disappointing Olyroos campaign at the Sydney Olympics.



Vince Grella: Hopeful of a Socceroo start in the future.

National League Round 13 Reports

	Adelaide City Force	1
	Olympic Sharks	3

By Allan Crisp

Olympic Sharks triumphed 3-1 over Adelaide City to inflict the first home defeat of the season on the Force in energy sapping 36-degree heat last Sunday afternoon at Hindmarsh Stadium.

With City persisting in its plans to vacate SA's premier soccer venue in favor of Norwood Oval for the remainder of its campaign, this match could well be its last at Hindmarsh for this season at least.

And, this game could go into the annals of NSL history as the first to be halted twice in each half for agreed drinks breaks to lessen the hardships of the oppressive conditions.

Troy Halpin was the architect of the Olympic victory, dictating

terms from the centre of the field with authoritatively accurate passing.

It was Halpin who delivered a precision pass for last season's Grand Final scoring hero Ante Milicic to slant the ball past David Scarsella in the Force goal after seven minutes.

Despite the best efforts of Carl Veart, Aurelio Vidmar, Goran Lozanovski and Iain Fyfe, it was not until two minutes into the second half that City snapped back with an equaliser from New Zealand international Shane Smeltz.

In a move worthy of the success it brought, David Terminello began the charge with a pass that Fyfe steered into the goalmouth where Smeltz rose to head a ball that Clint Bolton got a hand to, but failed to stop from entering the net.

That was the only black mark on the 250-game milestone appearance for ace goalkeeper Bolton, but he had more work to perform before the final whistle.

City increased its intensity on the back of that goal, but Halpin swung the pendulum yet again with a great 20-metre lob over young City goalkeeper Scarsella to douse the home team's hopes of continued dominance.

Those hopes faded further when jinking Japanese winger, Hiroyuki Ishida forged his through the Force with a tough run which left him with an easy put away into the empty net.

Earlier Olympic substitute Greg Owens also found his way past the leaky City defence to chip a lob, which struck the near post.

Paul Kohler joined his Shark colleague on the bad luck list when he let City off the hook when his attempt clattered against the crossbar.

While Olympic could have improved its goal difference, City also endured its moments of anguish with Smeltz spooning the

ball over the goal from right on the goal line after Vidmar combined with substitutes Ante Kovacevic and Matthew Kemp to create the late chance.

Veart, who was City's most productive and inventive player, was forced to leave the field after suffering a blooded nose, suffered in a clash of heads with Wayne Srhoj.



City captain Kovacevic replaced Veart for the final five minutes, his first appearance after being omitted from the previous two games. However, Kovacevic looks assured of a starting berth against Melbourne Knights as replacement for sweeper Diego Pellegrini, whose booking on Sunday will bring suspension.

It was a day when substitutions were essential and rival coaches Charley Villani (City) and Gary Phillips (Sharks) used all of their field reserves.

Meanwhile, former Youth Soccer coach Mark Byrnes, soon to join Perth Glory was not considered for selection against Adelaide City.



Sharks sharp-shooter Ante Milicic was on the scoresheet against the Force last week lifting his tally for five goals for the season.

	Melbourne Knights	1
	Wollongong Wolves	4

THE rapidly-improving Wollongong Wolves shredded a clueless Melbourne Knights side at Knights Stadium last Sunday to stake their claim as legitimate NSL top-six material.

A Stuart Young hat-trick and a beautifully taken goal to midfielder Alex Castro sealed a tremendous display from the Wolves, who made a static Knights defence look like traffic cones throughout.

The Knights left the field to loud booing ringing in their ears from supporters, who watched their side capitulate 4-1 to Perth Glory the previous weekend and got a far worse performance tonight.

The rout started after only six minutes, when midfielder Daniel Aliffi put a lofted ball into the path of the unmarked Young, who turned and volleyed home with his left foot from 15m out.

Aliffi and Young combined for a second on 28 minutes, with Young racing onto the midfielder's through ball and slotting it home via the post.

Three minutes later, the Knights briefly put some life back into a one-sided affair when Anthony Pelikan netted his eighth goal of the season.

But the Wolves took a stranglehold on the game with two goals in the first five minutes of the second half as the Knights defence - minus Soccerroo Steve Horvat who was replaced at halftime - fell to bits.

First Castro, who worked hard throughout, scored the goal of the game with a delightful right-foot chip into the far corner of the net.

Then Young completed his hat-trick when he found himself

unmarked again wide on the right, with all the time in the world to control, bring the ball on to his left foot and smash home.

The Knights never looked a threat and Wollongong were unlucky not to score more, such was their second half dominance.

After the match, Wolves coach Ron Corry was happy with his side's performance but was seething over an off-the-ball challenge which forced Aliffi off the field to have nine stitches in a head wound.

Corry accused Knights player-coach Andrew Marth of elbowing Aliffi and causing the injury.

Referee Perry Mur took no action, while most onlookers didn't see the alleged incident.

"It isn't part of the game and shouldn't be," Corry said.

"You can be hard, you can be tough, but you should play in the spirit of the game."

Marth gave his players a dressing-room dressing-down after the game, accusing them of not showing enough intensity in the second half.

Assistant coach Luciano Trani said the turning point of the game was the first five minutes of the second half, in which his side lost its way.

"We obviously wanted to put in a better performance after last week against Perth," he said.

"The first half was quite acceptable, but the turning point was the first few minutes of the second."

"We couldn't get the ball out of the back third of the field. That's where we lost the game today."

*Source - AAP



Stuart Young: Wollongong Wolves veteran striker scored a hat-trick in his side's four-one drubbing of the Melbourne Knights.

	Perth Glory	3
	Marconi Stallions	0

By Richard Kreider

A quality hat-trick from the National Soccer League's all-time prolific goal-scoring machine Damian Mori ensured Perth Glory were able to continue breathing down the necks of league leaders Olympic Sharks, thanks to a 3-0 triumph over Marconi Stallions last Sunday.

Mori's twelfth career triple now gives him 197 goals in total; three short of an unprecedented 200 that could be only days away going by his current form - a record that may well remain untouched for a very long time.

"We probably weren't at our best but we worked hard and got the result without conceding a goal," said the typically humble netbuster.

The fact that Glory never conceded a goal was due largely to another breathtaking performance from Jason Petkovic; arguably the best 'keeper in the competition.

This second-from-top versus second-from-bottom contest, that was played before yet another poor attendance by Glory's standards, never reached any great heights.

"Marconi are a better team than their position suggests," said a gracious Glory boss Mich d'Avray. "They played some neat football, kept possession well and made it very difficult for us."

However, former Soccerroo Gary Marocchi was not so benevolent with his comments about the Stallions during Radio 6PR's live match commentary, when he said.

"This is one of the worst

Marconi line-ups I have ever seen."

D'Avray did say the game still had its share of positives, in particular the return of defender Jamie Harnwell following a six-week absence through injury. Matty Horsley made his second substitute appearance after the death of his daughter, which earned compassionate applause from Stallions' midfielder Robbie Enes and Bobby Despotovski, who d'Avray said "looked hungry again."



Damian Mori: Destroyed the Stallions on his own scoring three times in their three-nil victory in Perth.

Petkovic's performance aside, it was a result that was always destined to become a home town victory, since the Stallions appeared bereft of innovation and clout for much of the ninety minutes. Much of this can attributed

to the side being predominantly young and raw and clearly missing the lethal Joe Spiteri up front.

Of the players who did perform, Ange Constanzo was sound in the backline, Enes (who was wearing the injured Dominic Longo's shorts) distributed well out of midfield and Grant Last proved to be an annoyance up front and made sure Petkovic earned his pay.

The game was only a couple of minutes old when Nick Mrdja twice tested Michael Turnbull's reflexes. The Stallions returned fire five minutes later when a string of short passes ended disappointingly with Last firing straight at the Perth 'keeper. After a number of chances went begging and five minutes remaining in the first period, Mori opened his account at the end of a lung-bursting run from the left wing with a curling strike from the front of the centre circle which sailed around the left glove of Turnbull.

Then with literally seconds remaining, Mori gave his team an even handier buffer when he climbed high to a Scott Miller free-kick, to head the ball into the net.

The third goal came eight minutes before full-time out of a solo run from Horsley who then centered goalwards. Substitute Chad Gibson cleared the ball off the line but only as far as Mori who lunged onto the ball with his head, in order to force it over the line.

What happened next was an extraordinary act of solidarity when almost all the Glory field players rushed to congratulate Horsley instead of Mori - because of the recent heartbreak in his personal life.

With the first half of the season now over, it is hard to consider anyone making a serious challenge on the Sharks and Glory, who are maintaining an imposing gap on the other contenders.



National League Round 13 Reports



South Melbourne Football Kingz

3
0

A VIRTUOSO performance by captain Paul Trimboli and some outstanding goalkeeping has seen South Melbourne beat the Football Kingz last Sunday night and move to third on the NSL ladder.

South turned in another powerful home performance to put a dent in the season of the visitors, who had been in impressive form this campaign.

After a Zeljko Susa thunderbolt free-kick opened the scoring in the 20th minute, Trimboli added two more to lift South after the previous week's disappointing loss to Brisbane.

The opening 20 minutes were even, with the Kingz compact in defence and stifling the home side.

Indeed it was only a spectacular free-kick that broke the deadlock, with Susa bending a left-foot rocket around the wall, with the shot rebounding off the inside of the post and into the net beyond the despairing dive of Kingz veteran keeper Mike Utting.

Susa could now claim a slice of South's history, with his goal the team's 1,200th in NSL competition.

After 30 minutes it was 2-0, as Susa fed Radomir Sekulovski to whip in a cross from the right which Trimboli controlled at full pace as he charged into the penalty area, swivelling to a hit a powerful volley into the roof of the net.



Ray Sekulovski (left) and Mark Burton shown in aerial action during last week's match in Melbourne.

The New Zealanders had seen the initiative snatched away in the blink of an eye, but created a chance in the 34th minute to pull a goal back - Chilean import Patricio Almendra feeding former South favourite Andy Vlahos.

One on one with the keeper, Vlahos shot low but South custodian Eugene Galekovic blocked well with his legs.

Galekovic performed further heroics in an identical situation just before half-time, this time depriving Paul Urlovic.

In between those two Kingz chances, Susa squandered his own opportunity by chipping wide when he had the goal at his mercy.

Neither side created as much in the second half, with Trimboli putting the result beyond doubt in the 74th minute.

A cross by Patrick Kisnorbo found Trimboli, and he had time to pick his spot, beating Utting at his near post.

Despite the 3-0 scoreline there was still drama to come, with the visitors winning a penalty in the 78th minute when Mark Burton was clumsily bundled over.

Almendra stepped up to the spot, and Galekovic pulled off his third goal-saving dive, but the rebound came to the Chilean who tried a cheeky backheel flick with the goal beckoning, only for the South keeper to save again.

Immediately after that missed attempt,

Susa was sent off for his second yellow card offence in three minutes - the first of which had prompted an ugly skirmish between the teams.

South coach Danny Wright said Trimboli's performance would shut up his critics, who did not appreciate how difficult it had been for the 33-year-old to overcome an ankle injury sustained early in the season.

"He's still a special player and I had a good feeling about him this week, he'd trained well," Wright said.

"It was a terrible injury he sustained...he just lost that edge with fitness and now he is

just starting to get it back.

"My senior players stood up today and that made the difference."

Kingz coach Ken Dugdale praised South's capacity to shut down Almendra, and to take their chances while his own side could not.

"We played some nice football, we created a couple of nice opportunities and we should have done better with them," said Dugdale.

"We have done pretty well up to now and hopefully we can get back on track."

*Source - AAP



Fausto De Amicis (right) shown battling with Football Kingz Chilean import Patricio Almendra for possession of the ball.



Sydney United

0



Brisbane Strikers

3

By Peter Damalas

The Brisbane Strikers continue to defy the critics after recording their second successive victory, comprehensively defeating Sydney United 3-0 at Edensor Park on Sunday evening.

After spending the majority of the early rounds rooted to the foot of the National Soccer League table, Brisbane have improved in recent weeks under the guidance of coach John Kosmina, who has been under fire this season.

Perhaps the most pleasing aspect of the match for Kosmina is the fact that the team held its own for the full ninety minutes and kept a clean sheet. For a defence that has leaked twenty eight goals this season, the worst record in the NSL, this result will provide them with extra confidence as the team prepares for the visit of last season's minor premiers, Perth Glory, on Saturday night at Ballymore Stadium. Meanwhile, Sydney United's fortunes look like turning in the opposite direction after a steady start to the 2002-2003 campaign.

Defeated 3-0 at Parramatta Stadium last week, Culina's men were ineffective in another impotent display. After going into the half-time break a goal down, United allowed the Strikers too much possession and subsequently conceded two soft goals, gifting Brisbane an easy three points. Following last week's inept showing, coach Branko

Culina reverted to a 3-5-2 formation with Croatian import Bozidar Cacic again playing at sweeper.

After recent tinkering with the playing system, which included the use of 4-4-2, Culina fielded his players in an attempt to keep the defensive shape. However, with creative dynamo Louis Brain being pushed onto the left touchline, where he was largely ineffective, further changes were required at the break.

The home team began with promise as they pressed deep into

Brisbane territory, and striker Jon Angelucci blasted high over the bar in the first minute. 22-year-old midfielder, Nahual Arrarte was energetic in the centre of the park by supporting the forward line and tracking back with some important challenges. Sydney United managed to conjure up three opportunities. First, a deflected free kick from Gabriel Mendez flew wide of Jason Kearton's post, and Brendon Santalab had two headers well saved by the 'keeper.

The away team were lucky not to concede in bizarre circumstances on 16 minutes, when captain Stuart McLaren lobbed his 'keeper with a backpass after a poor clearance from a goal kick. The Strikers were again let off the hook in the 29th minute, when Santalab hesitated to act on a brilliant long ball from Mendez, and a mix up ensued with Angelucci in the penalty box. Brisbane for their part were content to sit back and conserve energy in the



United striker Commins Menapi shown shielding the ball from Strikers defender Steve Laybutt.

opening stanza, considering the intense heat of the summer afternoon.

Despite the later kick-off time, the pace of the game was rather slow. In the 32nd minute, Peter Grierson caught the United defence flat-footed with a long cross-field pass to David Pilic, whose header took him past the onrushing 'keeper and allowed him time for a simple tap in. The former NSL Champions targeted Vanja Ivesa with long balls over the defence, and he was forced to clear his lines from outside his box.

His error of judgement on this occasion painfully exposed the goals, and Kosmina's men capitalised. The two coaches opted for change in the second half. Young striker Joshua Rose was introduced for Kris Trajanovski, while Culina made wholesale changes to personnel and shape.

Sydney United failed to come to terms with the changes, as Cacic was moved to the right to support the attack. The central defensive pairing of David Barrett and captain Paul Bilokapic were left isolated and overrun by a hungrier, more enterprising Brisbane strike force.

To their credit, both teams poured bodies forward in an attempt to score, leaving space in the midfield. 2002 ABSW Player of the Year, Fernando Rech, punished the home team 11 minutes into the second half with a deflected left foot drive from the edge of the penalty area. Rech was complemented in attack by the speedy Joshua Rose, and Anthony Roche, who held the ball up well and was effective with his distribution.

The former struck the base of the upright with a left foot shot that eventually fell into the path of



Brisbane's Fernando Rech (right) shown contesting with United's Mile Jedinak for the ball during last week's match played in Sydney.

Roche, who side footed directly at the goalkeeper. Roche made amends a minute later though following an identical move. Grierson was involved again, and his shot from outside the penalty area was palmed into the path of Roche, who clipped the ball high into an unguarded net.

While the home supporters exited the ground in droves, Brisbane continued to expose the gaps in United's defence with diagonal balls. Kosmina must feel his decision to persevere with a 4-4-2 system, after it was criticised earlier in the season, was vindicated after his well drilled outfit kept its shape and refused to allow Sydney back into the game.

A free kick from Bilokapic which was easily held by Jason Kearton was the sum of United's efforts in the second half. After successive 3-0 hidings, and this first loss at home, Branko Culina will need to regroup over the holiday period to prevent his team's season going into freefall. Brisbane's success, following last week's 2-1 triumph over South Melbourne, will ensure an even more congested table as clubs

STOP PRESS

The match between the Northern Spirit and Parramatta Power will be played on a later date due to four Spirit players currently away on international duty with both the Australian and New Zealand Under 20 squads.

The Spirit have already missed out on matches against the Stallions (Round 12), the Power and will not play the Football Kingz in New Zealand this week.

Soccer Australia will put forward the Spirit's rescheduled matches in the next few weeks.

ABSW will bring the readers the accurate dates when the information is passed onto the media.

BYE — NEWCASTLE UNITED

VICTORIAN CHRONICLES



By Brendan Davis

SOUTH BJS RECORD

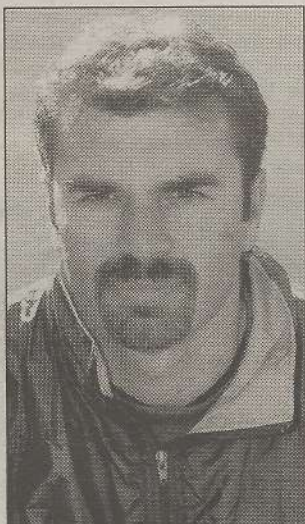
South Melbourne is on a five match undefeated streak at home this season. In Round 3, the Albert Park club drew their first home match against Sydney United, but have since defeated Perth, Olympic, Knights, Marconi and Parramatta.

South have had numerous home winning streaks, which range from four to seven consecutive victories at Middle Park and most recently Bob Jane Stadium. South Melbourne has won seven successive matches at home on four occasions being in 1983, 1990/91 into season 1991/92, 1997/98 and 1998/99 into season 1999/2000.



If Danny Wright and his players are victorious in their next two home matches, then the current

South coach will join Ferenc Puskas, Ange Postecoglou and Len McKendry as the only NSL coaches to have achieved seven home successive wins at the Club. And who knows, with any luck Wright could go one better and push the streak to eight, creating another historic moment at South Melbourne.



Ange Postecoglou: Former South Melbourne coach who enjoyed much success at the club.

Winning Streaks at home are as follows (does not include home finals games at another Melbourne venue) 5 in a row:

1978	Round 15-24
1981	Round 1-9
1981	Round 17-24
1989/90	Round 1-9
2000/2001	Round 23-30
1996/1997	Round 19 until

Elimination Final vs Knights Second Leg

2002/2003	Round 5-11
(current)	
1992/1993	Round 24-26
until 1993/1994	in Round 6
1998/1999	Rounds 9-20
1983	Rounds 18-28
until 1984	Round 19 (Len McKendry)
1990/91	Round 26 until
1991/92	Round (Ferenc Puskas)
1997/98	Round 9 -
Round 23 (Ange Postecoglou)	
1998/99	Round 25 -
Major Semi Final 1 vs Sydney United until 1999/2000	Round 6 (Ange Postecoglou)

KNIGHTS ATTRACT THE FANS

Melbourne Knights drew their highest crowd of the season against Perth on Sunday with 4,770 fans watching the goalfeast involving Perth Glory.

The atmosphere and noise around the stadium created a feeling is significantly more than this number too.

This exceeded their previous highest 2002 attendance of 4,500.

While NSL crowds are on the decline both Victorian Clubs continue attracting respectable gates despite some inappropriate fixture



ing and a lack of local derbys.

And the Knights were not assisted by the weather, it was a wet and miserable Melbourne day, so kinder weather would have seen an even greater attendance at Sommers Street.

The Knights largest crowd of the NSL season is still ahead of them - their derby on 16th February will draw a big crowds, this fixture has drawn over 10,000 in recent seasons.

DRAGONS AT BJS

With the Melbourne Dragons intending on playing their home matches at Bob Jane Stadium, talk is focusing on the likely improvements to the boutique stadium.

A grandstand stand on the St Kilda Road side which would include new change rooms for the Dragons and South as well as new administrative facilities for both clubs and additional corporate facilities are all on the drawing board subject to council and government approval and assistance.

And there has been talk of the Knights also relocating to Bob Jane with the prospect of an occasional "double header" if two Victorian teams were to play at home on the same weekend.

But a Knights official told ABSW "hell with freeze over before we move there."

With the election passing the new government has an opportunity to assist with the development of the code through planning and funding assistance so now we'll see if they deliver on their promise.

WRIGHT DEFENDS POSITION

South have three players on international duty so are entitled to defer their matches under FIFA rules, as Northern Spirit have elected to do.

But coach Danny Wright defended his decision to maintain South fixtured matches while Lia, Murdocca and Baird are on national duties despite last weeks loss to lowly Brisbane Strikers.

Wright said South will lose striker Vaughan Coveny to additional national duties with the Kiwis in the new year and there is always the risk of further injuries and suspensions.

He was a fraction disappointed however with Souths position on the table - Wright feels South



Vaughan Coveny: South star will be away on international duty in the New Year.

could have been a little better placed at this stage of the season. The poor results early in the season from matches against Wollongong and Sydney United were likely to have been upper most in Wrights mind when reflecting on Souths standing.



Danny Wright: South Melbourne's head coach.

FUTSAL THE KEY TO DEVELOPMENT

By Peter Damalas

Futsal has long been one of the lesser-mentioned sports in Australia. The indoor, five a side version of soccer has rarely figured in the news and receives very little, if no coverage in the media.

While competition on the global scale in Futsal is not as great as the outdoor version, the Australian men's team have achieved a certain level of consistency in qualifying for the main event, the World Cup. The team, coached by Scott Gilligan, is on the verge of qualifying for it's eighth successive tournament.

Futsal in Australia is organised around state competitions. Local competitions are held at the many indoor sports arenas in the country, and is followed by a state league, where the best teams and players compete against each other.

The annual national championships is widely regarded as the springboard for players wanting selection into the national team.

NSW Manager, Mr. Phil Dolton said that measures to reform the national league have been considered but have been hampered by the lack of sponsorship which threatens both the indoor sport and the National Soccer League.

"Soccer Australia's problems have had a slight effect on the running of futsal as it is part of the Futsal Commission. There seems to be a lack of direction at the national level. The appointment of a business unit manager to look after futsal at the top level was ratified at the recent board meeting, and will be put in place in

January", Mr. Dolton said.

When one thinks of Futsal, the skills and techniques of the Brazilians immediately come to mind. The skills displayed by the likes of Denilson, Juninho and Ronaldinho in winning the 2002 World Cup is a timely reminder of the role that the sport may play in the development of young talent.

According to national coach and state athlete development officer, Mr. Gilligan, speed, vision and skill are required to succeed in futsal.

"In indoor soccer, one cannot take on five players. It is important to have short sharp bursts of speed off the mark and quick feet. In most matches, there is only time for one or two touches and unlike outdoor, where there is more space, the player must trap the ball with the sole of the foot rather than the side because everyone is in a position to challenge for the ball.

Players must also have the ability to read the play and see what moves will be played before they happen" he said.

While Mr. Gilligan claims that Futsal should be recognised as an exciting form of soccer, he also recognised the role the sport plays in outdoor competition.

"Futsal should be encouraged and embraced at the youth level in order to improve the general standard of play. Notable soccer figures like Johnny

Warren have stated that indoor soccer is necessary to enhance skill and touch. In Brazil, until one is fourteen, he/she will play indoor in order to get the basics of the sport right" he said.

However, there has been intense competition between indoor teams and out-

door soccer clubs to retain the services of the brightest talents.

"There needs to be a compromise in this regard. Often we have soccer clubs asking young players to sign documents telling them which team they will play for, like a contract. Some are not even being paid," said Mr. Gilligan.

While the sport has taken off in Europe professionally, with Spain (current world champions), Belgium, Portugal, Italy, Holland, Russia and Uzbekistan, and in South America, the standard of play back home is still well behind.

In England, for example, there are over 100 academies including Premier League giants Manchester United, Leeds United and Everton.

Mr Dolton said "we fall behind the South Americans not so much in individual ball skills but in the speed of the game. I find that we can match other countries in skill and tactics but they have a faster pace, which in this sport, is crucial".

Mr. Gilligan also commented on the standard of the code. "In the last ten years, we have not gone anywhere. I believe that the coaching has not kept up to date with changes and developments.

However, recent performances have impressed countries such as Brazil and Italy. They are starting to see something happen with our style of play and it is more than just damage control".

The national coach named Brett Hewitt and 22 year old, Paul Lombardo as the backbone of the current team and is confident in the potential of the Under 15s side.

An academy has been set up in Narrabeen to teach boys and girls aged thirteen to sixteen.

Ken Dugdale: 'South Americans jazzing up NSL'

Football Kingz coach Ken Dugdale is backing his Chilean dazzler Patricio Almendra to continue frustrating Australian defences.

Almendra has been regularly targeted by opposition - during and after games - for his play-acting, as well as his undoubted skill.

But Dugdale told the Sydney Morning Herald, "I've studied all the videos of our games very closely, and as far as I'm concerned Pato

has nothing to be ashamed of.

"When he has spat, it's been at the ground and never at another player. It's his way of showing he's disappointed with himself. I know how I'd react if someone spat at me, and if I had any doubts, he wouldn't be on my team.

"As for the diving, well, that's a load of rubbish. The thing is this - if someone clips him, then he goes down.

It's the way the Latins play the game, and players in this league don't like it. There's an awful lot that goes on off the ball that people don't see, and he's making the referee aware of it.

"Why does he wind up other defenders? Well, maybe it's because he's too good for them. The Aussie way, or the Kiwi way, is if someone smacks you, you smack them back. Pato is from a different culture, so he reacts differently.

"It's up to defenders to work him out, not the other way around. If they don't want to look silly, then they need to be a lot more intelligent. They can't dive in, they can't kick him, or they're



One of the National League's finest stars this season, Chilean import Patricio Almendra has worked wonders with the Kingz this year.

going to get punished. It's as simple as that.

"Like [Braziliah] Fernando Rech at Brisbane and the boy [Uruguayan Gustavo Biscayzacu] at the Melbourne Knights, Pato brings something exciting to the league. People are talking about these guys, they are coming down just to see them play.

"They're jazzing up the league, and that's a good thing, wouldn't you say?"



Kingz coach Ken Dugdale believes that the South American imports of Rech, Biscayzacu and Almendra have lifted the league's status.



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SUNSHINE COAST STILL IN COMMAND

By Paul Schiavo

At the half way stage of the Super Summer League, surprise packets Sunshine Coast have maintained their lead over the rest of the pack.

Next week's match against the Gold Coast will be a big test for the North Coast outfit. In other matches Lion's continued their recent good form against Rochdale whilst the Gold Coast geared up for next week's top of the table encounter against the Sunshine Coast with a fine win against Toowoomba.

QLD Lions2
Rochdale Rovers0

The battle of the two Brisbane sides saw the Lions emerge victorious with a hard earned 2-0 victory against a tenacious Rochdale Rover's side at Lion's stadium.

Rochdale started the more purposeful and dominated the early minutes with a shot in the first minute sailing over the bar.

It wasn't until the 4th minute that the Lions began what was to be the pattern of the first half when a cross-field pass by Terry Hughes found Daniel Bernadin.

His through-ball found Scott Royal who controlled well on his chest but the Rover's defence did well to cover across before Royal could find a way to goal.

In the 5th minute a Lion's short corner was taken by Danny Flaskas. His pass to Terry Hughes saw the midfielder skin his marker and cross, however Daniel Ryan's header went wide of the target.

A half chance then fell to Scott Royal but his left foot volley in the box was miss-hit.

It was all Lions now and a quick exchange of passes between Damien Volkers, Scott Royal and Danny Flaskas saw Flaskas's final effort sliced wide of the goal.

Lion's midfield began to dominate and Damien Volkers continued the fine form he showed last week and looked particularly dangerous in the Rover's final third.

Rovers were conceding ground to Lions but as they did against the Gold Coast, looked quite dangerous on the break, especially live wire and leading goal score Mark Cruse.

Then in the 26th minute Lions took the lead. Damien Volkers controlled a difficult ball and passed to Scott Royal. Royal found Terry Hughes who turned and hit a great ball to the far post where Scott Royal finished with a well-timed striker.

QLD Lions1
Rochdale Rovers0

Half time couldn't come quick enough for the Rovers but Lions still had another chance when a Daniel Bernadin cross flew across the six yard box without a Lion's player on hand to deliver the vital touch.

Half-time:

QLD Lions1
Rochdale Rovers1

Lion's started the second half as they finished the first. In the 47th minute substitute Neil Monro found Danny Flaskas on the overlap and his cross just failed to reach Scott Royal on the near post.

Rover's best chance came in the 51st minute when a through ball caught the Lion's defence square and only a fine save by McMaster in the Lion's goal and a goal line clearance by Ben Fisher kept the score in favour of the Lions.

This was Rover's best spell of the match and another chance fell almost immediately when only an acrobatic save off a Rover's corner by Damien Volkers kept the status quo.

In the 60th minute a foul committed by Neil Monro led to a Rover's free-kick on the edge of the box that whistled just wide.

It was against the run of play that Danny Flaskas should have put Lion's two ahead but the striker lost his footing at the vital moment when confronted with an open goal.

In the 68th minute however, Flaskas made amends when after a good build up involving

substitute Julian Grimaud, his fierce shot left the Rover's keeper with no chance.

Old Lions2
RochdaleRovers 2

Still Rovers kept pressing and were unlucky when a strike by Cruse cannoned off the crossbar and cleared eventually by Jarod Lowe in the 78th minute.

Both side had chances in the final ten minutes with Lion's substitute Chris Di Sipio missing a one on one with the keeper and Danny Flaskas seeing another excellent strike sail centimetres over the crossbar.

Final Score

Old Lions2
Rochdale Rovers0

For Lions Damien Volkers and Danny Flaskas continued their good form of recent weeks and Ben Fisher looked solid at the back. Both teams were guilty of squandering a number of chances and Lions did well to keep Rover's goal machine Mark Cruse scoreless. Rover's coach Kieran Cooper was disappointed with the result and felt his team should have at least scored after playing well in the second half.

"Lion's played well in the first half and deserved their lead. Their quick passing and control was far above ours.

The second half was a far different story. Four clear-cut chances and Lions scoring the clincher while we were pushing men forward doesn't truly reflect on our second half performance. All in all, no complaints. We simply couldn't finish." In the other fixture, Gold Coast defeated Toowoomba 4-1, to set up a fascinating encounter at Morroochydore next Saturday night.

SOCCER REVIEW

A missed penalty has proved costly for the North Coast Suns, who returned from Maroochydore with a 3-0 loss after Saturday night's Super Summer League clash with competition leaders the Sunshine Coast Hawks.

The Suns began brightly to outplay the Hawks for the opening 23 minutes and looked set to take a deserved lead when awarded a penalty.

But a brilliant save from the Hawks 'keeper denied I'm Casagrande's dot shot, before a cruel twist of fate saw the Hawks awarded a penalty just minutes later. The Hawks penalty shot gave Suns 'keeper Richard Marshall no chance, allowing the Sunshine Coast to take a 1-0 lead into the break.

The Suns lost Tim Casagrande with ankle ligament damage just before the interval and captain Clint Willoughby couldn't start the second half as he succumbed to flu, forcing coach Mathew Kelso to shuffle the lineup, bringing on Adam Bostock in midfield and Jordy Campbell up front.

QLD SUPER SUMMER LEAGUE NEXT WEEK FIXTURES

DRAW FOR ROUND 7

North Coast Suns*

v

Queensland Lions

Sunshine Coast Hawks*

v

Gold Coast City

Toowoomba Raiders* /

v

Rochdale Rovers

*denotes home team.

But 13 minutes into the second half the Hawks showed why they're on top of the ladder with a superb move that culminated in a telling cross, that was met with a first time volley into the top corner of the net.

The Hawks wrapped up their fifth win in six games with a third goal midway through the second half, pouncing on a loose ball when the Suns defence failed to clear quickly enough.

Despite the loss the Suns toiled hard, with best performers being midfielders Nathan Williams, Adam Bostock and Jed Wright, along with Adam Holmes in defence.

"We were in control of the game until we missed the penalty and for them to turn around and get one against us and then lose a few players, really knocked the stuffing out of us" said Mathew Kelso.

MURDOCH

Former Altonville and Southern Cross Uni player Sam Murdoch is on the verge of establishing his career in Europe, flying out for Amsterdam tomorrow to link up with manager Micey Samardzic.

After a six month stint in Italy, Murdoch has enjoyed a brief holiday in Australia, but has now been invited by Samardzic to train over the christmas period, before being placed with a European club when new season signings are completed in January.

Murdoch's Croatian manager is based in Holland but has a stable of top name players that play all over Europe, including Juventus midfielder Edgar Davidz.

Samardzic has plenty of faith in Murdoch's ability, opening the door for the solidly built 20 year old to make a name for himself on the European stage. Murdoch played his junior soccer with Altonville before a few seasons with Uni and then moved on to Queensland State League club Wynham Wolves, before taking his career overseas.

QUEENSLAND SUPER SUMMER LEAGUE

Results & Table - Round 6

Sunshine Coast Hawks* ..3 **North Coast Suns0**
Queensland Lions*2 **Rochdale Rovers0**
Gold Coast City*4 **Toowoomba Raiders1**

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sunshine Coast Hawks	6	5	0	1	13	6	15
Queensland Lions	6	4	0	2	16	7	12
Gold Coast City	6	3	2	1	15	10	11
Rochdale Rovers	6	2	1	3	10	12	7
North Coast Suns	6	2	0	4	9	13	6
Toowoomba Raiders	6	0	1	5	4	19	1

Letters to the Editor

REMO THE ANSWER?

Dear Sir,
I know that at the moment many soccer readers are sick and tired of reading about politics in the game however I wanted to stress something that was stated quite clearly in your paper last week about Remo Nogarotto being elected as chairman, but had no-one to run against.

Why did Paul Afkos run for chairman in the first place when he knew that being a commissioner for the game would mean it would be highly unlikely for him to gain appointment for soccer's number one job?

I want to know why there wasn't any other names put forward as a candidate for chairman?

How about guys like Frank Lowy, Johnny Warren, Nick

Politis etc?

Remo unfortunately has not had a good track record with clubs in the National League.

His dealings with Marconi, Northern Spirit and even the Liberal Party were not the best and yet he gains our top spot?

I see this guy lasting a few months then he'll have a fight with someone in the board then the whole usual Soccer Australia scenario will again be put forward.

Don't be surprised that in a couple of month's time your paper has the headline 'New chairman wanted'.

We need guys that love the game, not politicians, we're sick of them!

Frank Pronesti,
Moorebank, NSW

REMO'S GOT IT TOUGH!

Dear Sir,
After reading your article on the appointment of Remo Nogarotto as the new SA chairman, I too am rather shocked that he was the sole contender for the job.

While Paul Afkos withdrew at the last moment citing the possibility of legal action against him, I still find it quite appalling that there were only two candidates.

This must say something of the current state of soccer in this country that there are not queues and queues of candidates wishing to fill the position. In any other sporting code the possibility of becoming chairman of the governing body is a job on the top of any list.

Nogarotto has taken over SA by default. His ideas appear as well to so far lack direction. Take for example his insistence that he and the rest of his board will comply with any recommendations passed by the independent review committee. While it is justifiable to comply with many of their ideas, to follow

the suggestions that the board should resign should a certain lack of conviction on the part of Nogarotto and Co.

What is needed now is stability and strength. Soccer Australia is facing many important issues for the time being and sadly these have not been met adequately in the past. To begin, Nogarotto must firstly get SA back to even and only once this is done can any real progress be made. Such a task will be long and arduous and therefore must be addressed with a stern hand for a prolonged period.

So for Nogarotto to come out a week into his tenure and say he will follow rather than lead does not hold the organisation in good stead.

As the months pass it will be interesting to see how things do turn out. For the time being though let's hope for the sake of the game Nogarotto adopts a tough stance into cleaning up SA.

Joseph Pagano,
Westmead, NSW.

ALL THE BEST THOMMO

Dear Sir,
I was one of the three thousand or so spectators that watched the Power play United a few weeks back but I just wanted to say how great of a feeling it was to see former Socceroo coach Eddie Thomson inducted into Soccer Australia's Hall of Fame for his outstanding services for the code in this country.

'Thommo' has for as far as I know been one of the best Socceroo coaches ever to guide the Socceroos, even though he failed to take the side to a World Cup. Seeing the crowd on Sunday clap and applaud the man was a great experience and I know its one he'll never forget.

A much bigger event or stage in my opinion was needed to recognize his achievements for the game but it was good seeing an article in your publication last

week recognizing his feats.

I hope that 'Thommo' overcomes his problem with cancer and that he can get back fitter and better than ever to stake a claim in helping the code out in Australia.

If it was in my hands I'd have him as our next Soccer Australia chairman, at least I know then that his heart bleeds soccer unlike the guys we have at the moment!

Ian Ridge,
Harris Park, NSW



Eddie Thomson.

Well Done Craig Moore

Dear Sir,
I read with interest in the Aussies Abroad section that Craig Moore is to be inducted into the Rangers' Hall Of Fame.

I for one would like to congratulate him on his nomination and hope that the process runs smoothly for him.

Glasgow Rangers is a giant of world football and have dominated the Scottish league for a great deal of time. Many great Scottish and overseas players have starred with the club and for Craig to receive his nomination speaks extremely highly of his ability.

He for a long time has been the most consistent player in the Rangers team and as such has developed cult like status among the Rangers fans. Even now, he heads the list as the best defender in the whole of the Scottish Premier League.

He has likewise shined in any game with the Socceroos and has made himself readily available for any of their matches. The last time I saw him play in the green and

gold was against Uruguay and was outstanding in a beaten side. Frank Farina no doubt pencils in Craig Moore's name first when he is selected the national side and probably will for a great number of years to come.

So I would just like to congratulate Craig Moore. He is deserving of the award and is at last being recognised for his outstanding from for his club Rangers and to a lesser extent for Australia.

Don Stevenson,
Marsfield, NSW.



Craig Moore.

Australia losing stars?

Dear Sir
After reading in the ABSW last week an article on 'Australia set to lose young stars', I seem to wonder how many of them have we lost?

Youngsters Jaime Young and James Wesolowski sound like some great talent and although I have yet to see them in action, a call-up for trials to the National Team wouldn't have harmed anybody. Its true to say that you can't really judge a player until you have seen them play a couple of times but its sad how our own products are subject to overseas loss.

How unfair is that we train a youngster here in our very own backyards then have countries like England, Croatia, Yugoslavia etc come through and pinch them away from us?

It's unfair to the good youth sys-

tem currently working well in this country of ours.

I guess we will only learn the hard way when kids like the ones mentioned play for other National sides and do well for them.

Phil Noyce,
Sunshine Coast, QLD.



James Wesolowski.

State Federations must lead the Way

Dear Sir,
I find it remarkable that even after the state federations compounded to get rid of Ian Knop and by democratic processes elect Remo Nogarotto to the post of chairman that they are still complaining that the wrong man is in charge.

I would say they would have a

case to answer if Remo was thrust to the top without any consultation, but the state federations have the largest influence in the elections of individuals to Soccer Australia.

Why don't they stop complaining about the current state of SA and proceed to improve it. As I have mentioned they have the

biggest influence in that organisation so they should take a forward step and lead from the front. To me however they seem quite happy to sit comfortably and only voice their concern when things are going wrong.

The federations must reverse this if any collective improvement is to be seen.

Lastly the state federations must lead, as any movement will have a flow on effect to the other stakeholders.

We all saw last month how the federations mobilised enough numbers to rid Knop and three others from Soccer Australia.

Such movement can and must be used in a positive way to promote the game.

They must join forces and this would force the other parties to unite in fear of being left out in the cold.

Only then will SA move in one single direction rather than being pulled in every which way.

This has gone on for too long and has cost much in the way of personnel and finances.

The frailties can not hold out for much longer and so must be addressed through the unification of stakeholders and Soccer Australia alike.

Chris Lidic,
Geelong, VIC.

SBS Wins Again

Dear Sir
It was only a matter of time until television station SBS were to claim the rights for the England v Australia clash next year, its simply the only real soccer station out in our country.

I've really enjoyed their coverage on the Premier League and their world wrap up show on Sunday's - a good six-hour program does the body real good!

I had no doubts as to SBS los-

ing this match rights to Fox Sports but its good to see that it came up the winner in the end.

I wish SBS would claim the National League rights at least that would give some of the Australian soccer followers something to smile about.

Its unfortunate that the rights went to seven a few years back and even though the then chairman David Hill said it was the best deal soccer in this country has ever done, what

have been its long term benefits? Sure the governing body got money from this deal but the game today is suffering with nothing shown on the box.

Channel Seven is simply an anti-soccer station, they are only interested in AFL, Union and other sports!

If it weren't for SBS, free to air soccer coverage in this country would be non-existent.

Ricardo Teixeira,
Eastlakes, NSW.

YOUTH SUCCESS

Dear Sir
It has come to my attention that for the past few years our young Australian squads have reaped rewards in gaining entry to a number of World Cup's in the U17 and U20 level however we have not been able to continue this winning trend with the Socceroos, why is that?

So many of the youngsters that are currently in the U20 squad will most probably end up being in the Socceroo squad so doesn't that mean that we would have a huge chance of making it due to the quality we currently have in

our younger squads?

All of the big names like Skoko, Okon, Agostino, Viduka etc have come through Australia's junior ranks and yet they've failed to do one better with the Socceroos.

It just baffles me to see this reoccurring cycle.

Its good to see our youngsters regarded as one of the best sides in the world but it's disappointing to know that our seniors are unfortunately a second or third rate National side.

Alan Ross,
Belconnen, ACT.

RE: Leeds United - First Division Next Year?

Dear Sir
In response to D. Gardner of Hampton Park last week regarding Leeds United playing in the 1st Division next year, I highly agree with him especially at the rate the side is currently playing at.

Kewell, Viduka, Smith, Bowyer, imagine them all in the Nationwide next year?

Terry Venables or I'd rather call him 'vegetables' has got it all wrong since day one at the club.

He's done nothing for the club to see them at least battle for a spot in Europe or so he said at the start of the season as one of his

main aims this year.

I'm sad to say that I'm a Leeds man but I think the only hope of us doing anything this year means we need to get rid of Terry!

If we don't then its goodbye Premier League and Hello Division 1.

It only seemed like yesterday we were competing with the Europe's best, now all that glory has gone. This season will be one that will surely raise mine and I know a few other supporters pulses racing.

James Whatham,
Clayton, NSW.

OFF THE CROSSBAR



By Allan Crisp

GALAXY SEEK FAMILY FEEL

Adelaide Galaxy, the reigning SA Summer Series champion, shocked more than a few folk when they decided not to defend the trophy when the Bianco Summer Night Series kicks-off in January.

Galaxy spokesman Jim Carapetis said the desire to expand and nurture club unity was the underlying reason behind his club's decision not to compete in the SASF run competition to be played at the Marden Sports Complex.

"We played our home games in last seasons series at Hindmarsh Stadium, but decided that our pre-season matches this time would be played at our real home base of Camden Reserve," Carapetis said.

"We know that opposition clubs appreciated playing at Hindmarsh where the facilities

are second to none, but our aim this time is to involve all our teams, seniors, Under 23s and Under 19s on the same day and at the same venue something that was not possible at Hindmarsh Stadium.

"We want to create and maintain a family atmosphere during the summer, leading to what we trust will be a successful Premier League season."

Carapetis said a number of trial games would be arranged with clubs not involved in the Bianco Summer Night Series.

Galaxy supporters will see a vastly different senior line-up this season as the Con Makris owned club trims its budget from last season.

Former West Adelaide Sharks and South Melbourne striker Jimmy Tsekinis has indicated he will leave Galaxy to possibly join Enfield Falcons.



Jimmy Tsekinis has been linked with a move to the Enfield Falcons this season.

New Galaxy coach Alby Kidd is currently overseas on a recruiting mission, the main objective being to entice a couple of Scottish professional players.

Vastly experienced Kidd succeeds Milan Ivanovic as Galaxy coach this season when he will be backed by Mark Brazzale as his assistant, Lemmy Vatsilas (Under 23s coach), Terry Hayes (Under 19s coach), while John Evans will be the director of junior coaching.

A former player with Arbroath, Motherwell, Dundee, Falkirk, Morton, West Adelaide Sharks, Adelaide Croatia and Central District Apac, Kidd then coached West Adelaide, Croatia, Apac, Salisbury United, Raiders, Elizabeth City and Playford Patriots.

Meanwhile, Modbury Jets are the team to fill the void left by Galaxy in Group B of the Ampol Cup style 2003 version.

Modbury Jets coach, Duane Gray welcomed the opportunity to test his team against Group B opponents, Blue Eagles, Olympic FC and newly promoted Enfield Falcons.

"We will use the series as a

trial for the Premier League season, but of course, we want to win every competition we enter," Gray said.

"Our biggest loss will be Robbie Matosevic, who will join Raiders next season," Gray lamented.

Group A comprises, Raiders, MetroStars, Playford Patriots and promoted State League club Croydon Kings.



NEW STARS

New MetroStars coach Michael Barnett has been busy during the off-Premier League season recruiting Corey Artone and Frank Sergi from Blue Eagles; Michael D'Aloisio from Para Hills Knights; Nick Galanopoulos from Olympic FC and Mark Graham from Galaxy.

Goalkeeper Ben Moore has gone from Galaxy to Enfield Falcons, but Galaxy has recruited Ken Tosh from Olympic and Damien DiMella from Playford Patriots.

A swap deal is being negotiated between Galaxy and White City Woodville with Damien Stam going to Woodville West, while Simon Bernadino switches to Galaxy.

Meanwhile, Galaxy and SA defender Paul Pezos have failed to agree on terms so big

Paul is seeking a new club.

White City is continuing negotiations to secure talented young Michael Keens from Para Hills Knights.

Playford Patriots have secured Andy Allen, Jamie Bell, Ryan Manolev, Carlo Vittaretti, Frank Marron and Matt Gaston.

However, the exit gate also swings with fine servant, George Haralabakis retiring, while Steve Kidd, Neil Childs, Shane Pearce, Con Georgiou and Daniel Mignone join the previously mentioned DiMella in departing the Patriots.

MEDAL COUNTRY

White City president Steve Nikolic is spicing his recruiting drive with the phrase, "If you want to win the SASF Player of the Year award, join the White City Warriors."

"We told the young players (aged between 10-17) who came to our junior trials that this is the club that has the most former medal winners on its books," Nikolic said.

Hes not wrong. When Brad Armour won his second Melta Medal for the club last season, the steady defender joined Rab Jones (1968), Uros Zivkovic (1972), John Kamleitner (joint winner with John Perin of Juventus in 1976), Wally Bojczuk ((1979), Adrian Santrac ((1981), Paul

Shillabeer (1985), Brian Welsh ((1986), Michael Brooks (1996).

DORIGO TAKES THE AIR

Tony Dorigo, who began his illustrious soccer career as a junior at Birkalla, is about to return to Elland Road where he will join another ex-Leeds United defender, Mel Sterland as football commentators with 96.3 Radio Aire.

The Leeds-based broadcaster has promised to provide a bigger and better coverage, surpassing the already comprehensive broadcasts of all Leeds games.

"Leeds United Live" will make its debut with the Sunderland v Leeds Premier League game from Sunderland on Boxing Day.

Dorigo went from Birkalla to Adelaide City and while still a tender 15-years of age, travelled to England where he was apprenticed to Aston Villa.

He was overlooked by Frank Arok for the Australian team when the national coach preferred Graham Jennings for his left back position.

Dorigo still became an international, later being chosen for the England World Cup squad.

He played 111 games for Aston Villa before transferring to Chelsea. Dorigo was a member of the England squad that played Australia at the Sydney Football Stadium in 1991, when Graham Taylor was the England manager and Gary Lineker the captain.

England won the game 1-0.

Radio 1197am RPH Adelaide
Presents

THE BREAKFAST SOCCER SHOW

Join ALLAN CRISP, KYLE PATTERSON, ANGELO PICCA, AURELIO VIDMAR AND ROB POPPLESTONE

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Farina Impressed by 'Chippers'

Australia coach Frank Farina believes Scott Chipperfield is on the verge of big things in Europe.

The FC Basel winger has just returned from long-term injury and is a target for several Premiership and French clubs ahead of January's transfer window.

Charlton Athletic lead the race for the former Wollongong Wolves midfielder from Leeds United, West Ham, Sunderland and crack French outfit Olympique Marseille.

Although well covered for left-sided midfielders, Farina has indicated he wants Chipperfield as part of his squad for February's big game against England. He told the Daily Telegraph, "He's done magnificently since going to Basle - and he just gets better and better."

"He has the absolute confidence of his coach Christian Gross who rushed him straight back into the first team once he'd recovered from a recent knee ligament injury [which kept him out for three months]."

"He's also in the shop window with Basle and is very much in mind on our journey towards the next World Cup."

"He has a big decision ahead of him, whether to continue in the Champions League or shore



Scott Chipperfield: Former Wolves star has impressed Socceroo coach Frank Farina.

up his long-term future by moving on." Farina added, "He has pace to burn plus the ability to take players on at will."

"He's also quite versatile and can operate either on the left as a midfielder as a wingback or as a striker. He's improved immensely since leaving Australia."

"He's down to earth, ambitious and a dream to work with. I think he'd be more than comfortable in the Premier League."

"But who knows he might choose to stay for another season in Switzerland where he's obviously very happy."

Postecoglou pleased with U/20 Squad

Postecoglou pleased as Australia U20 breeze through qualifiers Australian U20 defeated Papua New Guinea 6-0 last Monday in their second and final Group A match of the Oceania World Youth Championship Qualifying tournament in Port Vila, Vanuatu today.

The win ensures that Australia finish top of Group A with the team now qualifying for the play-off matches which are scheduled for Thursday December 19 and Sunday December 22.

The Young Socceroos dominated throughout with the match highlighted by a hat-trick to captain Scott McDonald and an outstanding display from fellow striker Alex Brosque.

Australia held a two goal margin at the half-time break thanks to a spectacular headed own-goal from PNG defender Sam Lepani in the tenth minute, and a superb Scott McDonald shot from the edge of the penalty area in the 38th minute. The Australians over-ran their opponents in the second half and two goals in quick succession to McDonald - both of which were set-up by Brosque - doubled the lead and effectively killed off the game.

Brosque was again the provider when he supplied the final pass for South Melbourne's Vince Lia to score in the 76th minute, before finally grabbing a goal of his own. The 19-year-old Marconi youngster obstructed as he surged into the penalty area, converted from the penalty spot to complete the scoring.

Coach Ange Postecoglou was pleased with both the way his team performed and the outcome of the match, "We started off a little slowly

today, and it took a while to hit our straps but once we did, we did it pretty comfortably."

"It was a chance for me to see some more of my players, I made three or four changes which allowed me to have a look at a few more players in match conditions."

"The camp in Melbourne has given me a chance to work with the guys at training and put some really meaningful training in and also get some cohesion going." The Oceania Football Confederation have scheduled the

Group A winner to play at home on December 19 and away on December 22, however should Australia win Group A and New Zealand win Group B, the play-off matches will be held on December 19 in Auckland and December 22 in Melbourne.

The winner of the play-offs will earn the right to represent Oceania at the FIFA World Youth Championship to be held in the United Arab Emirates from 25 March - 16 April 2003.



Scott McDonald: Claiming a hat-trick against PNG last week.

Ange Postecoglou: Pleased with his U20 squad.

Okon's timely reminder

Socceroos skipper Paul Okon made his first start for Leeds two weeks ago since joining the club and has his sights set on retaining his position at Elland Road and with the Australian national team.

Okon has admitted Leeds United's struggles are disappointing, but says morale remains high within the squad.

Speaking after making his first appearance for the club - in the 1-0 loss to Fulham - since switching from Middlesbrough, Okon told www.lufc.co.uk the players are standing by manager Terry Venables.

"It's a disappointing time for us all at the moment," Okon admitted.

"The only thing that matters at the moment is the result. I think Terry Venables is 100 per cent correct in saying that we are all together, no one is jumping overboard, we are all committed."

Just weeks ago it seemed that Okon would be overlooked with young guns Marco Bresciano and Vince Grella poised to line up for the glamour friendly against England next February. However, Okon did well despite the loss to Fulham and should be a certain starter for the Socceroos if he can continue to play regularly for Leeds.

This scenario would certainly relieve some pressure from Farina who was faced with the task of deciding whether to drop his incumbent captain, who had not played in the Leeds first team for over four months.

Okon told The Daily Telegraph: "It's never been an issue for me whether I am the captain or continue to be the skipper."

"When Frank Farina named Mark Bosnich captain when he took over for the two-match series against Brazil (in 1999) I never made a fuss and had no problems with it."

"Whether or not I continue in the role of captain is down to Frank."

Ands Okon has received a vote of confidence by the man many believe will be his successor in the role, Genk skipper Josip Skoko.

"He has led the team really well and has a great football mind," Skoko said



Could this be the start of a new beginning for Paul Okon?

of Okon.

"You can accommodate players of his class, even if they haven't been first-team regulars at their clubs."

"I'm glad he's back and it will be nice to see him silence some of the critics."

"I don't see any reason to take the captaincy from him. Players like him are impossible to keep out of the equation."

Okon also weighed in with his view on the relationship between Leeds and Australian teammates Harry Kewell and Mark Viduka.

"Even if they don't get on socially there is a healthy respect between them," Okon explained.

"The whole thing was blown way out of proportion. We all had a laugh and joke about it at training the other day."

"I don't think Terry has spoken to either of them about it and as far as we're all concerned it's forgotten."

The former Marconi Stallions product will use his first start at Leeds as a positive step in gaining that performance that saw him do ever so well in Belgium a few years back. More starts with United will also mean a better chance in reclaiming his captain's armband, time shall however tell on the Australian star at Elland Road, right now he and other squad team members are concentrating on staying in the Premier League.

NEILL TARGETS ROOS RECALL

Aussie defender Lucas Neill has established himself as a mainstay of the Blackburn defence and he is now hopeful that he will be given the opportunity to do the same with the Socceroos.

In a telephone hook-up with Australian media from his home in England, Neill revealed that he is eager to return to the international scene after last having played for his country at senior level in 1998.

And a crack against England at Upton Park in February would be a dream come true.

"It would be a huge achievement for me just to get in the squad," he said modestly.

"I'm not expecting to get in the squad just because I play in the Premier League but I feel it gives me a good opportunity because it's raised my profile.

"If I can get in the squad obviously I would like to play some part in it but just to get in the squad would mean I am heading in the right direction."

The 24-year-old made his debut for the Socceroos way back in 1996 but has only two caps to his name.

Neill had to withdraw from the last World Cup campaign due to injury.

"I was unlucky to get injured for three weeks after I got called back for the Uruguay game and that would have been my first time with the Australian team for well over a year," he explained.

"For me being an Australian and representing Australia in the Olympics and the younger levels is a big achievement.

"I've already achieved more than I ever thought I would so now I want to better myself as a player and the only way I can do that is on the world stage."

Neill was heartbroken when forced to pull out for the World Cup qualifiers in November

to the World Cup. And that has to be one of our main goals now.

"We are not respected as a national team in football as we are in other sports so it would be nice especially with the England game coming up and hopefully qualify for the World Cup and make our mark on the world."

Neill could be classed as a utility with Australian youth coaches often using him in a variety of midfield positions while Blackburn boss Graeme Souness has not been afraid to move him across the backline.

Although Neill declared that his preferred position is right back - which is sure to have Socceroos incumbent Kevin Muscat on the edge of his seat.

"I really enjoy the right back position and have played the majority of my games there (for Blackburn). I feel that it is the most comfortable position for me," he said.

"He's (Muscat) a great lad, as is Craig Moore his (Rangers) teammate, and I spoke to them no long ago actually.

"I don't expect to walk straight into the team where Kevin Muscat has held the position so long. I just want to get in the squad in February and give Mr Frank Farina something to think about."

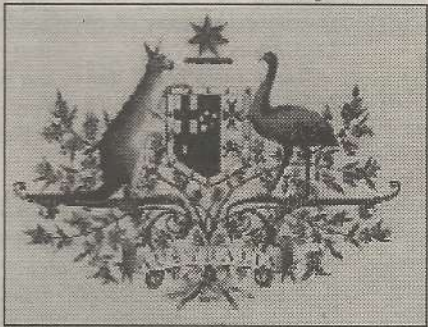
Despite his preference Neill is not a one-dimensional player and has ambitions to return to the midfield down the track.

"I'd like to play a little bit further up the field but with the talent that we have got (at Blackburn), and we usually play a 4-4-2 system, I am just going to have to bide my time.

"I'd take any position I can to get back into the Australian squad and establish myself as a squad member.

"Ideally I can see myself playing right back in that team cause we have some great talent further up the field."

There is some talk that Neill could be



Lucas Neil: Blackburn's Australian star doing well in the Premier League.

2001 and confirmed that it was the most disappointing moment of his career.

"Definitely. I was in a hotel room watching those games," he remembered.

"In the first game I thought we were brilliant but we probably needed another game and the second game I was throwing chairs around the room.

"It's one of those games where you feel you want to be there to support the team in some way and help them get through (to the World Cup)."

The former AIS graduate believes that a World Cup berth would wake the sleeping giant that is Australian soccer.

"That is the only way Australian soccer is ever going to be taken seriously. If we can get

played as a centre-half as Farina looks for a long-term partner for Moore at the heart of the Aussie defence.

Despite his limited experience in the role, Neill is sure that he could handle the change.

"I would never write an opportunity off if it meant playing in the team so I would give it a go.

"I wouldn't say I'm a complete centre-half. My manager (Souness) said one day I would make a good centre-half so that is why we sometimes go three in the back. But I have never played in it in a 4-man defence.

"But being the person that I am - competitive and confident - I am sure that I could do a job."

*Source - Theo Katsaros

OKON JOINS OCEANIA CHORUS

Socceroos captain Paul Okon has called on FIFA to give Oceania direct entry to the World Cup Finals from 2006.

The Leeds United midfielder, who led Australia in its unsuccessful World Cup qualification campaign against Uruguay a little over 12 months ago, told AAP Oceania should not be forced into such playoffs to qualify.

"FIFA go on about 'fair play, fair play, fair play', well giving Oceania direct qualification would be the biggest fair play thing they could do," Okon said.

"I personally think the World Cup means having at least one team from every confederation and that means one from Oceania.

"Football is a global game and Oceania is a part of the world where football is not very strong.

"But Oceania is one of the confederations so it has a right. If you've got



Socceroo star Paul Okon has voiced his opinion strongly on Oceania gaining direct qualification towards the next World Cup.

four from Asia and five or six from South America, why not one from Oceania?"

FIFA will hold an executive meeting next week in Madrid at which time it will decide whether to grant Oceania an automatic place for its champion team.

Okon added that the current system is too unfair and that Oceania is being treated like a second-class citizen.

"Saudi Arabia's results at the last World Cup were atrocious," Okon added.

"Look at our passage, when we had to play a cup final home and away against a South American team. From our point of view, that's very, very unfair.

"Other people say we need to do that because we win Oceania too easily. It's not our fault where Australia is geographically.

"I don't think Oceania should be punished by not having direct passage."

BYRNES BOUND FOR GLORY

Olyroos hopeful Mark Byrnes is set to leave the defending NSL champion Olympic Sharks to move to Perth Glory.

Byrnes' current short-term contract with the Sharks expires next week and he has announced on his website that he will be transferring to Perth.

"I'm looking forward to this move, as Perth Glory is a highly respected club," the 20-year-old said.

"Hopefully with the move to Perth I will be able to play some good football and help the club win the NSL premiership that has eluded them so far."

"I've enjoyed my time with the Sharks and I'm sure they'll be there at the end of the season to defend their title," he added.

Byrnes, who captained the silver medal-winning Australian team in 1999 at the Under 17 World Championships in New Zealand, was also the youngest



Mark Byrnes: Former U17 skipper is hoping for glory in Perth.

ever Young Socceroos representative when he played in the Under 20 team at 17 years of age.

He began his NSL career with Parramatta Power in 1999 before going to Italy in 2001 on loan to Serie B club Vicenza.

In March, while playing for Vicenza's reserve team, Byrnes injured his knee and was out of action for nearly a month.

While in Italy, he was selected to the European-based Olyroos squad, with an eye on the Athens Olympics.

"My other major aim is to play well in the eyes of Frank Farina and be selected for the Olyroos squad," Byrnes noted, while thanking the people who had supported him in Sydney.

Nogarotto Pushes For Olyroos Tournament

Soccer Australia's (SA) financial woes may prevent the Olyroos contesting a tournament in Qatar early in 2003.

With the Australian Sports Commission closely looking at the governing body's spending, and having withheld \$300,000 in grants, SA will decide on Friday whether to send the Olyroos on the tour according to *The Daily Telegraph*.

The ASC is said to have held back on the latest instalment of its \$2.3 million annual funding because it has concerns that SA is trading while insolvent, but new SA chairman Remo Nogarotto says he hopes the Olyroos tour does not become a casualty.

"I'd like to think that the Australian Sports Commission funding will be used for purposes like fund-

ing the Olyroos to Qatar," Nogarotto said.

"But that's a decision the board's got to make based on the balance sheet in front of us.

"My view is that our participation in the tournament should go ahead, but the responsible position to take is one based on the strength of the numbers on the balance sheet."



New SA chairman Remo Nogarotto.

Young Socceroo Live on SBS

Thanks to a unique arrangement between SBS and the Seven Network, the match that will decide the Young Socceroos' qualification for the 2003 World Youth Championship will receive LIVE coverage on the SBS network.

SBS will screen the match after the Seven Network agreed to sublicense the broadcast rights.

The match represents Australia's Young Socceroos' (Under 20's) final hurdle in the campaign to qualify for the 2003 FIFA World Youth Championships to be held in the United Arab Emirates.



Carl Valeri & Nathan Coe: The U20's Inter Milan connection can be seen live on SBS on the 22nd of December.

Australia finished as undefeated winners of Group A of the Under 20 Oceania Qualifying tournament and will play off against the winner of Group B (comprising of New Zealand, Fiji, New Caledonia, Samoa and Tonga).

The televised match of the second leg will take place on Sunday, December 22 in Melbourne and SBS will screen the match LIVE during The World Game program.

Certainly not one to miss with so many future stars on show, and who knows, you may well see future Socceroo players too.

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE 2002/03

DEVIL FANS PUSH FOR DE JESUS

By Graham Cooke

Belconnen Blue Devils coach Lino Fiorese is standing by his decision not to play former National League star Ivo de Jesus, despite a growing revolt by fans who want to see the former Canberra Cosmos favourite in the starting line-up.

A section of the crowd barked steadily for de Jesus during the home NSW Premier League game with St George Saints, at one point putting up a chant of "bring on Ivo".

That would have been an impossibility as de Jesus was not even on the bench for the match, which the Devils won narrowly with a goal in stoppage time.

The man who had earlier been described as Belconnen's biggest signing, was not making any comment on his exclusion. "You'll have to ask the coach," he said.

Fiorese, who has acquired the reputation as an uncompromising disciplinarian over his three years in charge of the Devils, said he "needed a little more" from the attacking midfielder.

"He has to work on his fitness levels," the coach said.

"He is not up to the standard I would like him to reach.

"We are a team and everyone has to work to get their fitness standards to a certain point. We aren't carrying players, that is the way the team has always been built."

"I hope Ivo will improve during training, because that is what he will have to do.



Belconnen Blue Devils new recruit Ivo De Jesus.

This is a hard working team; what success we have had over the last couple of seasons has been built on that, and we are not about to change it now."

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE 2002-2003 NORTHERN DIVISION

RESULTS - ROUND 13

TUESDAY 10 DECEMBER 2002

ACTAS

(Menser 51' pen)

1 CANBERRA DEAKIN

(Ivanic 12' 21', Spaleta 25' 85', Pideski 41')

5

MATCH BROUGHT FORWARD FROM ROUND 15 -

To be played on Wednesday 11 December 2002

OLYMPIC SHARKS YOUTH V AIS

Match postponed due to waterlogged pitch.

POSTPONED MATCH FROM ROUND 1 -

Played on Sat 14 Dec 2002

NEWCASTLE UNITED YOUTH

(R. Griffiths 12', Wilkinson 24')

2 ACTAS

(O'Brien 23')

1

SATURDAY 14 DECEMBER 2002

MARCONI MUSTANGS

(Turrissi 20')

NORTHERN SPIRIT YOUTH

(Vasili 53')

AIS

(Lagana 8', Jankovski 72')

1 MARCONI S. YOUTH

(Mengi 46')

1 PARRA. POWER YOUTH

0

2 WOLVES YOUTH

(Dellis 55')

1

0

1

SUNDAY 15 DECEMBER 2002

SYDNEY UNITED YOUTH

0 QAS

(Grossman 36')

1

BYE - Newcastle United Youth

BYE - Olympic Sharks Youth

NORTHERN DIVISION - ROUND 12

TEAM

Parramatta Power Youth

AIS

P

W

D

B

L

F

A

Pts

11

7

2

2

2

30

15

23

10

6

3

2

1

16

7

21

Canberra Deakin
Wollongong Wolves Youth
Newcastle United Youth
Sydney United Youth
Northern Spirit Youth
Olympic Sharks Youth
ACTAS
QAS
Marconi Stallions Youth
Marconi Mustangs

12* 6 2 2 4 33 18 20
10 5 2 2 3 21 13 17
11 4 4 2 3 18 15 16
10 5 0 2 5 25 16 15
10 4 3 2 3 8 6 15
11 3 5 2 3 13 12 14
10 4 1 2 5 16 21 13
11 3 2 2 6 14 28 11
11 2 3 2 6 11 28 9
11 0 3 2 8 3 29 3

NORTHERN DIVISION FIXTURES - ROUND 14

FRIDAY 20 DECEMBER 2002

Newcastle United Youth v Sydney United Youth

SATURDAY 21 DECEMBER 2002

Canberra Deakin v Northern Spirit Youth

QAS v Marconi Mustangs

SUNDAY 22 DECEMBER 2002

Parramatta Power Youth v Wollongong Wolves Youth

Marconi Stallions v Olympic Sharks Youth

BYE - ACTAS

BYE - AIS

Force looking towards Norwood

Adelaide City Force's decision to move its remaining home games to Norwood-Oval may be the death knell for soccer at Hindmarsh Stadium.

The SA Government has a \$40m soccer facility that is lying dormant.

It is understood the SA Government is investigating its options for the future of Hindmarsh Stadium. These include selling or leasing the ground to another sport.

The ARL is believed to be interested in using Hindmarsh Stadium to re-introduce rugby

in South Australia. There has been speculation that the ARL is having discussions on purchasing the stadium from the SA Government.

Adelaide City Force committed to play all its home games at Hindmarsh Stadium as part of the deal on the stadium's refurbishment.

Further Soccer Australia gave the SA Government a guarantee that all SA NSL games would be played at Hindmarsh Stadium. Both parties have reneged on these arrangements and the SA Government is justified to feel aggrieved by the situation.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

A look at Soccer's serial relationships

By Ashley Morrison

"They say I slept with five Miss World's but it was only three" are words uttered by the one and only George Best, a player that evoked envy from his peers both on and off the pitch.

In the 70's every woman with aspirations in modeling, music or acting would help their prospects by being photographed with Gorgeous George.

Not only do these high profile couplings gain huge media coverage but the stories that are played out in real life are far too raunchy for most everyday Soap operas.

The attempted kidnap of Victoria Beckham along with sons Brooklyn and Romeo a case in point

Who can forget in the 80's the comments from the diminutive Teresa Bazar, singer in Dollar who after sleeping with former Arsenal and Scotland striker Charlie Nicholas said, "We talked about football but all he wanted to talk about was sex.

I hear he's not been scoring many goals recently and that's why he left Arsenal, but I can tell you he certainly scored a hat-trick with me that night."

But top of the all time soccer/superstar charts would have to be Posh Spice and David Beckham.

There are probably very few corners of the World that one or the other is not known. They are the toast of the tabloids, however should Posh lure David to Italy things could soon change.

Another Pop partnership but much lower in profile is that of former Liverpool Captain and Spurs midfielder Jamie Redknapp and Louise Nurdling. Louise was the Caucasian in the girl group Eternal before forging her own successful solo career.

One pairing that was unable to last the full ninety minutes was that of "the beauty and the beast."

Having met while she was in pantomime in Southampton, Australian Soap star Emily Symons made her home away from "Home and Away" with

Saints star Matthew Le Tissier.

Pound for pound this looked a good match, but then again consistency was always Le Tissier's problem.

Another Australian who has enjoyed life on the farm, "Emmerdale Farm" is Harry Kewell.

Leeds based Harry had only to slip across the dales to team up with Sheree Murphy. Sheree has now left the popular soap leaving Harry free to further his career in Italy or Spain.

Its not surprising that Blackburn's Alan Miller has been stuck on the bench with Brad Friedel in such fine form, but the real reason could be that he let "Brookside's" Claire Sweeney slip through his fingers.

While he's sat in the wings her star has soared in the West End.

One player who has not quite grasped the fact that it is meant to be the starlet on the soccer player's arm rather than the other way around is former Manchester United and now Blackburn striker

Dwight Yorke.

Yorke was for a while spotted with underwear model Caprice, but then moved onto "Coronation Street's" Tracy Shaw, who won Britain's coveted rear of the year - which is more than Dwight's won for a while.

Not happy with a Shaw thing, he tried to score with co-star Naomi Ryan. He didn't!

Proof that these pairings can last is the marriage of former Sheffield Wednesday and Arsenal front man Lee Chapman's to "Men Behaving Badly's" Deb (Leslie Ash).

But then after the antics of Tony and Gary life with a footballer should be a breeze.

Ultimately these celebrity couples prove one thing, that Birmingham City's

Chairman Ms Karren Brady - who herself married a footballer, Paul Peschillo - may have been slightly off the mark when she was quoted as saying "Footballers are only interested in drinking, clothes and the size of their willies." But then again, maybe not?

Austria, Switzerland to host Euro 2008

Austria and Switzerland have won the race to jointly host the Euro 2008 football championships, European football's governing body UEFA announced on Thursday.

But Hungary made a surprise showing by reaching the final two in the voting, UEFA sources said.

Greece and Turkey also reached the last three, upsetting widely touted Scotland and Ireland, and an unprecedented bid from a group of four Nordic countries made up of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. The other contenders were Russia and Croatia/Bosnia.

There was muted applause as Austrian and Swiss delegates hugged each other when UEFA president Lennart Johansson opened the envelope with the result of the final ballot by UEFA executive committee members.

Austria and Switzerland had largely been viewed as favourites, with a technically accomplished bid as well as solid financial guarantees securing their nine-three vote in the final

round.

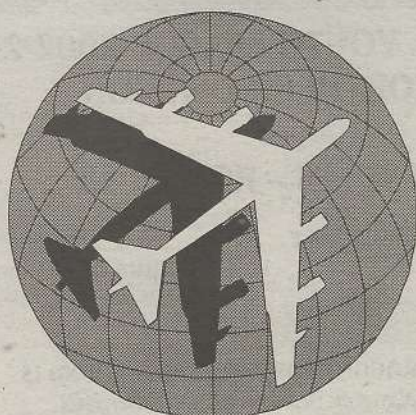
"They did their work well, the quality of their dossier was convincing," UEFA chief executive Gerhard Aigner told reporters, adding that it was "the best technical bid".

Swiss and Austrian officials said their final 15-minute presentation to the executive committee last Wednesday had sought to add a touch of emotion to overcome the two countries' reputation as being clean and efficient, but dull.

"We are deeply touched and deeply grateful for the confidence shown by the vote of the executive committee in our bid," Ralph Zloczower, president of the Swiss football federation said.

"We can promise that the European championships in 2008 will be something special and unforgettable," Friedrich Stickler, Austrian federation president added.

Switzerland/Austria had claimed to offer easy access in the middle of Europe with their 112 million euro bid.



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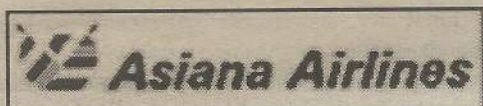
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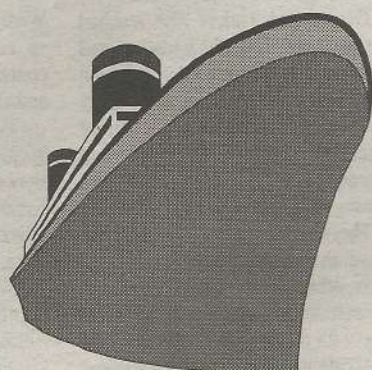
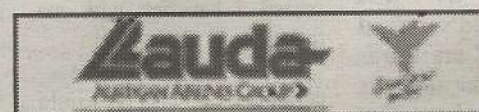
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NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

After Round 13

	TOTAL							PTS	HOME							AWAY						
	P	W	D	L	Bye	F	A		P	W	D	L	F	A		P	W	D	L	F	A	
OLYMPIC SHARKS	12	9	2	1	1	27	14	29	6	6	0	0	12	1		6	3	2	1	15	13	
PERTH GLORY	12	9	0	3	1	24	11	27	6	5	0	1	13	5		6	4	0	2	11	6	
SOUTH MELBOURNE	12	6	2	4	1	21	18	20	7	6	1	0	18	7		5	0	1	4	3	11	
NEWCASTLE UNITED	12	5	2	5	1	19	13	17	6	4	2	0	14	4		6	1	0	5	5	9	
FOOTBALL KINGZ	12	4	4	4	1	17	14	16	6	2	3	1	8	6		6	2	1	3	9	8	
WOLLONGONG WOLVES	12	4	4	4	1	14	15	16	5	2	3	0	3	1		7	2	1	4	11	14	
ADELAIDE CITY FORCE	12	4	3	5	1	18	17	15	6	2	3	1	11	8		6	2	0	4	7	9	
SYDNEY UNITED	12	4	3	5	1	12	16	15	6	4	1	1	9	6		6	0	2	4	3	10	
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS	12	3	5	4	1	20	25	14	7	3	2	2	12	14		5	0	3	2	8	10	
PARRAMATTA POWER	11	3	3	5	1	14	15	12	6	2	1	3	9	10		5	1	2	2	5	5	
BRISBANE STRIKERS	12	3	2	7	1	20	28	11	6	1	0	5	7	17		6	2	2	2	13	13	
NORTHERN SPIRIT	10	3	2	5	1	14	23	11	5	2	0	3	9	13		5	1	2	2	5	10	
MARCONI STALLIONS	11	2	2	7	1	9	18	8	4	1	1	2	5	7		7	1	1	5	4	11	

ADELAIDE CITY FORCE

(S Smeltz 47')

OLYMPIC SHARKS

(A Milicic 7', T Halpin 58', H Ishida 76')

Cautions: D Pellegrini (AC) 38', T Halpin (OS) 74'

Venue: Hindmarsh Stadium.

Referee: Mark Shield

Crowd 02/03: 1,878

Subs Not Used: O'Brien (gk).

SOUTH MELBOURNE

(Z Susa 22', P Trimboli 30', 62')

FOOTBALL KINGZ

Cautions: P Kisorbo (SM) 5', R Liparoti (SM) 27', Z Susa (SM) 77', J Campbell (FK) 88'

Red Card: Z Susa (SM) 79'

Venue: Bob Jane Stadium

Referee: Brett Hugo

Crowd 02/03: 4,010

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS

(A Pelikan 31')

WOLLONGONG WOLVES

(S Young 7', 28', 51', A Castro 47')

Cautions: D Cervinski (WW) 18', D Aliffi (WW) 38', N Sekulovski (WW) 62', R Vargas (MK) 72'

Venue: Knights Stadium

Referee: Perry Mur

Crowd 02/03: 3,052

SYDNEY UNITED

BRISBANE STRIKERS

(D Pilic 32', F Rech, 56', A Roche 62')

Cautions: N Arrarte (SU) 87'

Venue: Sydney United Sports Centre

Referee: Matthew Breeze

Crowd 02/03: 3,263

PERTH GLORY

(D Mori 41', 45', 80')

MARCONI STALLIONS

Cautions: G Last (MS) 17', D McDonald (MS) 45', T Sekulic (MS) 72', D Mori (PG) 72', A Costanzo (MS) 75'

Venue: Perth Oval

Referee: Eddie Lennie

Crowd 02/03: 8,903

NORTHERN SPIRIT

V

PARRAMATTA POWER

(Postponed)

Note: Due to communication problems we were unable to publish the full list of NSL stats.

PLAYER OF THE WEEK



Stuart Young
(Wollongong Wolves)

It was a tough decision this week to pick a player of the week with a number of stars performing quite well for their respective clubs.

Glory's Damian Mori netted three goals in their convincing three-nil win over the Stallions. Troy Halpin played a commanding game for the Sharks while veteran midfielder Paul Trimboli showed the South faithful he still has what it takes to cut it in the big league with a wonderful display of football.

However it was the Wollongong Wolves number ten, Stuart Young, that grabbed ABSW's attention as the experienced striker bagged a hat-trick in the Wolves four-one away win against the Melbourne Knights.

The 31-year-old was in scintillating form but also grabbed a piece of history with him when he managed to notch up his 50th goal of his career in the NSL through his second goal of the game.

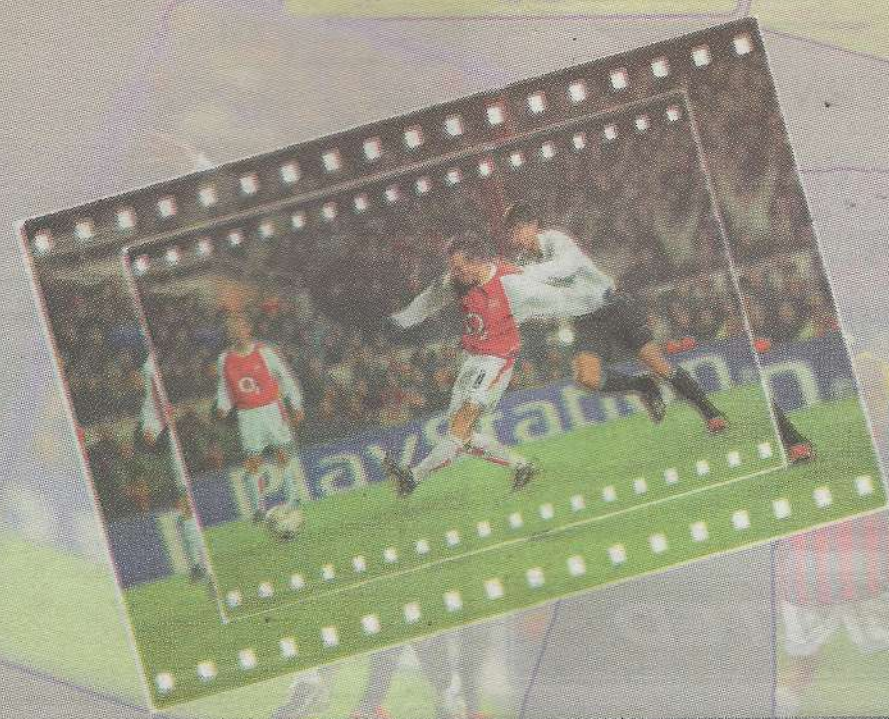
Young's tally now stands at eight for the season - if the Wolves had trouble hitting the net this year, Stuart will surely be the man they'll be looking for during the remaining NSL Fixtures.

LEADING GOALSCORERS

Name	Club	Total
MORI Damian	Perth Glory	12
GRIFFITHS Joel	Newcastle United	8
PELIKAN Anthony	Melbourne Knights	8
YOUNG Stuart	Wollongong Wolves	8
RECH Fernando	Brisbane Strikers	7
NGATA Heremaia	Football Kingz	6
ALMENDRA Patricio	Football Kingz	6
HASELL Bradley	Perth Glory	6

BYE - NEWCASTLE UNITED

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE ACTION





CHAMPIONS LEAGUE ACTION



From The Dressing Sheds

By Mark Stavroulakis

Kick starting this week's weekly column on 'From the Dressing Sheds', it's good to see the Young Socceroos performance last week downing Vanuatu and PNG to progress to the final stage of qualifying for next year's World Cup in Dubai.

BAD BOY OF THE WEEK



Zeljko Susa
(South Melbourne)

The skilful 24-year-old midfielder turned from hero to villain for South Melbourne last week in their three-nil victory over the Football Kingz.

Susa started the game off with a bang scoring his side's opening goal with a thunderbolt free-kick that left Kingz keeper Michael Utting stranded under the posts.

His goal will be written in the history books as being South Melbourne's 1200th goal of their NSL careers.

Joy went to despair though for Susa as in the 77th minute, referee Brett Hugo produced a yellow card, however two minutes later produced another prompting the South stars send off.

Having had a tough start to the year due to his problem obtaining a clearance from Croatian side Hadrjak Split, Susa can be excused for the time being, however coach Danny Wright cannot afford anymore suspensions especially at this stage with three players currently away on international duty.

Skipper and Southampton star Scotty McDonald certainly stole the show with four goals in two games - a great sign of a leader.

Other notable performances were that of Inter Milan's Primavera star Carl Valeri, Strikers gritty midfielder Matthew McKay and Stallions young starlet Alex Brosque.

Close sources have stat-

ed that the current batch of youngsters have the potential to make the Socceroo squad in years to come but expect one-two players from the squad gaining a call-up soon.

-It's quite sad to see a number of officials and coaches in Australia put current Feyenoord star Brett Holman down.

The former Parramatta Power striker's raw talent has immensely increased since his time in Holland and he only gets better.

-The Young Socceroos' first match against Vanuatu in Vanuatu was as if the young lads were playing on home soil.

A crowd of 5000 plus witnessed the Australians defeat their Pacific Island counter-parts two-nil, but of that 5000, the majority were Australians.

A P&O cruise liner had docked in Vanuatu that day and once they heard that an Australian soccer side were playing they rushed to the match cheering on the boys to victory.

-From an Australian point of view, there's nothing like beating the English in sports. It's quite safe to say that sports like Cricket, League and Union has seen the Australians topple the Lions but will they beat their football side?

Apparently next February's friendly clash at Upton Park has already created a lot of kind-hearted banter amongst the Australian-based stars in the Premier League and the English players.

Middlesbrough shot-stopper Mark Schwarzer stated last week that "I have had people come up to me saying that Australians beat us at everything else, but you are not going to beat us in this match."

While Birmingham City's pacy left-sided star Stan 'the man' Lazaridis told the Advertiser, "It's been good-natured but the needling has started and that can only mean they're worried."

With only two-months away from the big match let me just add that the hype at ABSW's offices has started already.

-The Brisbane Strikers look set to open the cheque books this coming January when the transfer window re-opens by stating that a Tahitian international is on the cards of signing for coach John Kosmina's side.

The Strikers will be the only side in the National League to have a player hailing from Tahiti but Brisbane General Manager Ray Evans has stated nothing is certain yet. The club is looking at signing the striker for the new future - providing his eligible to play in the National League, but the Strikers GM refused to

give-a-way the player's name.

-It was a huge day for Olympic Sharks custodian Clint Bolton as the club's number one played his 250th match against the Adelaide City Force last week.

The 27-year-old commenced his career with the Brisbane Strikers in 93/94 season and now becomes the seventh most experienced goalkeeper in the history of the National League.

Leading the charge in playing the most matches as a shot-stopper is former Marconi Stallions 'brick wall' Bob 'the builder' Catlin.

Having played 345 matches in the NSL, Catlin is still playing soccer at NSW's Summer Super League side the Leichhardt Tigers.

Here's a list of the Most Experienced NSL Goalkeepers.

MOST EXPERIENCED NSL GOALKEEPERS

Bob Catlin	345 games
Jeff Olver	300
Gary Meier	296
Mike Gibson	288
Tony Franken	278
Jason Petkovic	251*
Clint Bolton	249*
Tony Pezzano	249
Peter Laumets	226
Brett Hughes	224*

*denotes currently active

-Just another timely reminder that the Northern Spirit's Round 14 clash against the Football Kingz at Ericsson Stadium this Friday has been cancelled.

The Spirit last played on the 1st December against the Knights and won't play a game until the Round 15 clash with the Brisbane Strikers.

-The where is Con Boutsianis playing saga continues with sources close to ABSW stating that the former South Melbourne midfielder has signed with

Victorian side Oakleigh Cannons. The Cannons apparently have ex-Melbourne Knights striker Alex Kiratzoglou on their books. This however is all not confirmed but merely speculation - it's a shame that we've been unable to see the free-kick feats by Boutsianis who to this day is still regarded as having one of the best left footed shoots in the business.

-Good news has hit promising young Stallions striker Kevo Gulesarian as the former Young Socceroo has at least another week until he fully recovers from his knee injury.

Kevo, a former AIS graduate, is raring to go for Marconi who have had a bad run of injuries this season.

The most damaging being gun-striker Joe Spiteri. Having kicked-off his career with Marconi in fine fashion notching up four goals in his first two starts, Spiteri broke his arm during their round 9 clash against Newcastle United.

Gulesarian will add that much needed fire power up front for Raul Blanco's squad.

-Skills coach Dusan Purac is proving to be one big hit across the world as interests from France, Spain, USA, India, Hong Kong, South African and Canada have asked for his skills video titled 'Ready Set Goal'.

After Purac signed a deal with English company Quantum Leap for a January release, the world then honed in on the former Yugoslav international's ability to teach youngsters the skillful way of playing football.

ABSW will keep you updated with future developments on 'Doctor Darcy's' video skills success.

-Look to see a promi-

nent National League coach retire at the end of the National League season. The unnamed person took over the squad in season 2000/01 and has done remarkably well, especially this season with the club proving many pundits wrong with some amazing results on the pitch. ABSW will keep you informed with further developments regarding this issue.

-It was a memorable day for Wollongong Wolves English import Stuart Young last week against the Knights in Melbourne.

The classy striker bagged a hat trick and in it came his 51st National League goal.

year. South Melbourne currently have Michael Baird, Massimo Muroccca and Vince Lia in the current U20 squad so coach Danny Wright will need all the depth he can this season to fill these youngsters positions.

The other exciting player is shot-stopper Adam Federici.

'Fredda' has been offered trials at English Premier League side Bolton Wanderers. Apparently Adam was told to pack ALL his things for the trip - a sign that we could yet see another keeper circling the pitches of England.

-SA's media man Gary

Round 15 Fixtures

27/12

Wollongong Wolves v Marconi Stallions

29/12

Perth Glory - Parramatta Power
South Melbourne - Newcastle United
Sydney United - Football Kingz
Olympic Sharks - Melbourne Knights

Bye - Adelaide City Force

* Northern Spirit v Brisbane Strikers rescheduled for a later date.

At the age of 31, there's no telling where the scoring will stop for Young however rest assured, coach Ron Corry hopes that his star striker can continue this trend right until the end of this season.

-Whilst on the goal-scorers front, this man certainly never strays away from being mentioned on the score sheet. Young Knights attacking midfielder Anthony Pelikan claimed yet another goal for his club last week.

Even though his side went down four-one, it was Pelikan's eighth goal this season - Surely one of the players of the season so far.

-Two players to keep a watchful eye on in the next few seasons will be current AIS graduates Frankie Lagana and Adam Federici. Lagana, hailing from Shepperton on the outskirts of Melbourne, has been offered trials at National League club South Melbourne.

The 17-year-old striker is expected to sign with the club's first grade squad and if all going well, could land himself some game time in the National League this

Moretti was spotted at the recent Force-Sharks clash over the weekend at Hindmarsh Stadium.

Moretti, born and bred in South Australia, was in town for the weekend celebrating his brothers 40th birthday.

It was reported that Moretti was quite the player in his hey day at local SA Premier League club the Adelaide Blue Eagles.

Known as a crafty midfielder, Gary could have gone all the way but decided to don the pen and pad instead.

-What a difference a win can make for a club in the National League. Having battled in wrong-end of the table for the majority of the season, the Brisbane Strikers stunned onlookers at the Sydney United Sports Centre after Kossie's men taught Culina's squad a lesson winning three-nil lifting them off the foot of the table.

The Strikers lie in eleventh spot, and signs are positive that things can only get better for the club - Don't think any supporters will be calling for Kosmina's head after this victory!

Round 14 Fixtures

20/12

Marconi Stallions v Olympic Sharks
Newcastle United v Sydney United

21/12

Brisbane Strikers v Perth Glory

22/12

Parramatta Power v Wollongong Wolves
Melbourne Knights v Adelaide City Force

Bye - South Melbourne

*Football Kingz v Northern Spirit rescheduled for a later date



SOCCER NSW



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NSW PREMIER LEAGUE SEASON 2002/2003

MATCH OF THE ROUND

 Central Coast Coasties	1
 Penrith Panthers	0

By Paul Goodwin

In a game that had looked destined to end in a scoreless draw, Central Coast Coasties were able to slot home an 87th minute winner against a shell-shocked Penrith Panthers last Saturday night.

Second against Third was always going to be a hard-fought game and that is what a large Plum Park crowd, boosted by a healthy contingent of visiting Panthers' fans, got for their money.

Penrith started the game in their normal direct way, putting pressure on the young Coasties' defence.

Jason Sciberras, especially, was making runs both through the middle of the park and wide out on the right, while Luke O'Connell and Coasties' defender Chris Fleming were involved in a gripping battle.

The Coasties had a couple of shots that

went just wide of the uprights, while Penrith's efforts were confined to a couple of speculative long shots that were easily handled by home keeper Ben Xerri.

Clearly the Panthers missed their engine room, with both Peter Bennett and Daniel McCann absent, due to injury and suspension, respectively.

They lacked creativity and on a number of occasions were caught with the ball in dangerous positions. However, the Coasties also had players missing going into the game without Peter Preston, Peter Haynes and Marc Falzon.

The side lacked creativity and was at times beaten to the ball by a more committed Coasties outfit.

Early in the game Panthers' goalkeeper Chad Taylor took a knock that left him inconvenienced for the rest of the match, aggravating an injury that had kept him out of the previous weekend's contest.

Penrith always looked the more likely team to score in the first half, though.

Around the middle of the half Rod Hutchison was on the end of a good Penrith move, but a great covering tackle by David Brewer stopped what looked like the opening goal.

Coasties had their moments and a great cross-goal pass by Aron Binskin found James Monie's head only to see the ball hit the crossbar and bounce straight down onto the goal line.

While the game was free-flowing there were only limited strikes on goal by either side, with just that one clear chance that came to Coast striker Monie.

The teams were tightly locked, scoreless at half time.

Ben Wright, who was probably Penrith's best player in the first half, battled injury and finally had to come off in the 62nd minute.

The second half saw the Coasties get more into the game, and familiarising themselves with the hard Penrith tackling.

The game became a stop-start affair with both sides giving as good as they got with five yellow cards being issued in a twenty minute period.

With three minutes of normal time remaining Pat Bradley cleared the ball long to Daniel Surridge, waiting out wide on the left.

His inch-perfect cross found defender Sean Matthews, who headed home what proved to be the winning goal.

The Penrith defence had been caught napping.

Taylor got some glove on the shot, but it was not enough to deny Coasties the late winner.

The Coasties thus maintained their unbeaten record having moved back to the top of the table, albeit only overnight.

Panthers' best were Ben Wright who was sorely missed in the last half hour of the contest, Luke Boyd and Rod Hutchinson.

Coasties were best served by Josh McGuire, Daniel Surridge and James Monie, while the experienced Pat Bradley and Nathan Byrn held the youthful unit together well.

Coasties coach John McLafferty was naturally again full of praise for his young charges.



The Coasties James Monie in aerial battle.

"We went into the game without Preston, Haynes and Falzon, who are a big part of our strike force, and once again our youngsters performed beyond their years. Our first three games were against free-running teams but tonight, for the first time, they were up against a hard, but fair, tackling team who gave no quarter.

"Pleasingly, they learnt a new style of game tonight and again came through with flying colours.

"As I have said before, we are taking it one game at a time, no fancy promises or predictions; we will change our game plan according to our opponents

Panthers' coach Tony Rassmussen was naturally disappointed with the loss, and was critical of his side in failing to pick up Sean Matthews who was left alone for too long and then capitalised to punish the Panthers unit right at the death.

CENTRAL COAST COASTIES1

(S Matthews 87')

PENRITH PANTHERS0

at Plum Park, Lisarow

CENTRAL COAST COASTIES: 20 Ben Xerri, 3 David Brewer, 19 Sean Matthews (C), 4 Mitchell Cook, 6 Aron Binskin, 14 Chris Fleming, 8 Daniel Surridge (5 Liam Cameron), 10 Marc Falzon, Nathan Byrn (11 Tom Quilty), Pat Bradley, 13 James Monie (90), 2 Josh Maguire

Sub not used: 1 Andrew Goldman (RGK) Trott, Mitchell, Cooper

Coach: John McLafferty

PENRITH PANTHERS: 1 Chad Taylor, 2 Chad Lewis, 5 Ben Wright (7 David Gardiner), 6 Daniel Wells, 21 Luke Boyd, 10 Shane Hammond, 11 Luke O'Connell, 13 Jason Sciberras, 19 Danny Hinton (25 Marty McCaffery), 9 Rod Hutchison (3 Luke Tyurski), 35 Tim O'Connell

Subs not used: 20 Osvaldo El Ali, 24 Kurt Van Arkels,

Coach: Tony Rassmussen

Referee: Jonathan Streater

Assistant Referees: Gordon Selkirk and Peter Gibbs

Fourth Official: Jim Barnes

Yellow Cards: Central Coast: Josh Maguire; Penrith Panthers: Luke O'Connell, Marty McCaffery, David Gardiner, Lu Luke Tyurski.

SOCCER NSW

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SOCCER NSW



Blacktown City Demons	2
Fairfield Bulls	1

By Paul Goodwin

Two superbly taken goals by The Demons paved the way for a convincing, if narrow win at The Gabbie over an enterprising Fairfield Bulls on Saturday night.

Blacktown began the better but could only pepper Darren Moore's goal with long range efforts, either straight at the grateful keeper or skied over the bar. The first twenty minutes belonged to Blacktown who showed all the promise in that period, especially from Luke Roodenburg and Kain Rastall, that was to prove productive later on in the game.

Fairfield then came into the match, but they were not direct enough in their approach work when opportunities presented themselves and paid the price.

Several times Adam Snyder made his way through the defence only to spurn the chance to shoot at close range, when facing

only the keeper, electing instead to lay the ball off to the striking duo of Matt Borg and Marc Hoenselaars, who were under a tight defensive hold.

When that pair did break the shackles, they, too, were wasteful with tame shots at the keeper or efforts that were well off target.

Seven minutes before the break the Demons struck.

A lovely through ball from Naoki Iwaya, following a David Reid-inspired attack, allowed Kain Rastall to get away down the right.

Rastall turned his markers inside out and then found the net from a tight angle, in superb fashion, after powering his way through the heart of the Fairfield defence.

Reid almost made it two, seconds before the break, with a glancing header, from a Jim Nikas cross, that flew wide.

Some quality football was being played by Blacktown, but the Bulls had nowhere near enough intensity to match them.

In the 76th that man Rastall again featured in the goal that extended the home side's lead. He ran onto a Pat Gatt pass and sent over a first time cross which Luke Roodenburg deftly tucked past Darren Moore in clinical and impressive style.

Fairfield pulled one back a minute later when Tomich fed Snyder on the right and from the cross that resulted Hoenselaars was able to arrive unmarked at the far post to slam home.

Roodenburg also had a shot in stoppage time pushed onto the bar by the keeper while The Demons had to survive a Fairfield free kick on the edge of the box seconds before Vic Gauci blew for time.

Blacktown coach Brian Brown was very pleased with the performance, considering that Dione Valle (sick) and Damien Foxe (injured) were missing and Paul Yates could only be risked for the last half hour.



Blacktown City Demon's Kain Rastall caused headaches for the Bulls.

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS 2
(K Rastall 38', L Roodenburg 76')
FAIRFIELD BULLS1
(M Hoenselaars 78')
at Gabbie Stadium, Blacktown

BLACKTOWN CITY: 1 John Crawley (C), 5 Ben Willard (2 Paul Yates 67'), 15 Patrick Gatt, 12 Dane Hokin, 13 Steve Riches, 6 David Reid (24 Bishara Stephan 77'), 7 Simon Catanzaro, 9 Kain Rastall, 11 Jim Nikas, 10 Naoki Iwaya, 4 Luke Roodenburg.
Subs not used: 14 Luciano Berbis, 16 Roger Galayini, 20 Nik Jelic (RGK)
Coach: Brian Brown

FAIRFIELD BULLS: 1 Darren Moore, 12 Ismael Arrarte, 14 Sefer Yildiz, 6 Arthur Diles, 7 Adam Snyder, 4 Jason Connolly, 8 Stewart Van Bentum, 13 Adam Peaty (21 Luke Tomich 75'), 11 Robert Angievski, 9 Marc Hoenselaars, 10 Mathew Borg.
Subs not used: 16 Mitch Daley, 20 Ali Akbal (RGK)
Coach: Craig Sharpley
Referee: Vic Gauci
Assistant Referees: Kurt Ams and Leonel Romero
Fourth Official: Ernie Horvath
Yellow Cards: Blacktown: Jim Nikas 34
Fairfield: Nil

Bonnyrigg White Eagles	1
C'bury-M'ville Olympic	2

By Greg Stock

By his own admission Berries midfielder Paul Bourke doesn't score too many goals. In fact, over the past four seasons, you can count on one hand the number of times he has hit the net.

Not that scoring goals is the main staple for a defender, give his main responsibility is to mark the opposition striker, but as a midfielder, it's a completely different story.

On Saturday night, Bourke put all that history aside, taking centre stage at the Serbian Centre and sinking Bonnyrigg with two great goals to give his Berries a morale boosting 2-1 win.

Reinvented by coach Greg Woodhouse during the off-season, 'Bourkey' has proven to be a revelation in the Canterbury engine room, his experience proving invaluable to a young side looking for a leader. Despite not having played there since his early years at Blacktown, his

two goals on Saturday night lay testament to the fact that he still has the ability to make a side pay in front of the sticks, given half a chance. With his side struggling to hold out a rampaging Bonnyrigg for the first twenty minutes, he took the first opportunity that presented itself.

It was a classic move which started from his own side of halfway and ended up with him chipping the advancing Fernando Greco from the edge of the penalty box. Alan Picken and Andy Amegashie timing their runs to perfection to keep the defenders guessing, feigning their move to allow Bourke an unchallenged run right to the edge of the box, opening up Bonnyrigg like a tin of sardines. His second was more conventional, when he smashed home a short pass laid off from a free kick, almost breaking the back of the net in the process.

It was a huge boost for his side given that had hadn't won any of their first three games, and doubly special for coach Woodhouse against the club that dispensed with his services



Kindness Agwu put away a penalty for the White Eagles.

at the end of last year. While the score did favour the visitors, the home side didn't help their cause any when Michael Hawrysiuk was dismissed on twenty minutes by referee Nick Asargiotis for making a lewd gesture. It was an uncanny burst of illdiscipline from Hawrysiuk who is better noted for his creativity in front of goals, but reduced to 10 men, the sting went out of the Bonnyrigg-tail and they were left to try and salvage the game.

They did get back to 2-1 when Kindness Agwu put away a penalty after John Kyriazopoulos bundled him over in the box, but realistically they struggled to regain the momentum they showed in the first ten minutes when they hit the bar and wasted two other strong chances. Even the introduction of the nippy Joe Bruni after just 35 minutes could do little to inspire his side who could do little but sit back and wait for the counter attack. All that aside, it was a night for Paul Bourke and his Berries; one that both will long remember.

BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES .1
(Kindness Agwu 75')
C'BURY-M'VILLE OLYMPIC ...2
(Paul Bourke 30/70')
at Serbian Centre, Bonnyrigg

BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES: Fernando Greco, Freddy Umlil, Tayfun Devrimol, Askin Oygur, Kindness Agwu, Michael Hawrysiuk, Shane Knight, Anthony Kanaan (Joe Bruni), Devrim Huseyin, David Hadring, Javie Mancino (Aleksander Asanovic).
Coach: Ljube Jancev.

CANTERBURY-MARRICKVILLE: Ivan Neeovski, Michael West (George Norah), Cormack Begley, Sasa Utjesenovic, John Kyriazopoulos, Con Paradisis (Atheleas Kotsopoulos), Andy Amegashie (Leigh Gunn), Alan Picken, Michael O'Riley, Paul Bourke, Ben Price.
Coach: Greg Woodhouse.

Referee: Nick Asargiotis
Assistant Referees: Peter Apostolou and Sandro Perticari
Fourth Official: Greg Laverton.

Rockdale City Suns	4
Bankstown City Lions	1

By Greg Stock

Rockdale City turned the normally fiery 'derby' into a Sunday School picnic, thumping arch rivals Bankstown 4-1 in fine style at John Crehan Park. With over 2,000 expectant fans packed into the joint, the Suns seized the initiative, storming to a 3-0 lead inside the opening half hour, to set up an easy victory.

Reshuffling their forward line to include the nippy Robert Todorovski, Rockdale went on the early rampage, with Ben Deighan and Spase Najdoski scoring three between them.

Deighan picked up the first goal nodding home a near post header after a great run down the left by Tony Ju, before Najdoski threw his right foot to a loose ball in the penalty box eleven minutes later.

He then made it three nil when he cleverly slotted home a left foot strike from the edge of the penalty area after latching onto a pass from

Todorovski. It was a half-hour that the Lions won't forget in a hurry as they were outmuscled, outclassed and outgunned, missing tackles, and meekly surrendering the ball to the rampaging Suns.

Their midfield in disarray coach Lee Sterrey opted for a couple of replacements in the 33rd minute, introducing Daki Fallon and Damien Luksic to stem the flow.

The move getting the Lions back to 3-1 at half-time when Fallon lobbed a through ball over the Suns defence for Colin Luff to stream onto and beat the advancing Peter Trajceviski with his shot. But when Denis Alilovic found the net in the 64th minute the points were all but wrapped up safely in the home sides keeping.

A couple of worrying concerns for Lions coach Lee Sterrey were the sendoffs of Rod Madigan and Bryan Raeburn in the second half. Both players felt the ire of referee Alex Spiroski for two yellow cards, and will automatically miss a week with suspension. Given

that the match was all but over when the second offence was committed, it's a shame that their ill discipline will rub off on the side next week.

Without the services of midfielder Ralph Bove, Bankstown were simply not in the hunt. For the first thirty minutes they were like witches hats, allowing Rockdale far too much space and time to create chances.

At the other end, their inability to keep possession for any length of time, starved their key strikers Norman Tome and Colin Luff of any tangible opportunities to fight back.

For the home side, Todorovski and Najdoski were head and shoulders above the rest. Tony Ju did some nice things down the left hand side, while Ben Deighan had his usual solid game in the midfield.



Ben Deighan opened the scoring in Rockdale's goal-fest.

ROCKDALE CITY SUNS4
(Ben Deighan 9', Spase Najdoski 20', 28', Denis Alilovic 64')
BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS ...1
(Colin Luff 42')
at John Crehan Park, Cringila

ROCKDALE CITY SUNS: Peter Trajceviski, Eddie Wong (David Brickell 24'), Ghenadie Costiuc, Richard Plesa, Peter Apoleviski, Ben Deighan, Spase Najdoski, Denis Alilovic (Sash Tirovski 80'), Robert Todorovski (Trent Worrall 81'), Malcolm Bideau, Tony Ju.
Coach: Mile Todorovski.

BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS: Brad Swancott, Todd McManus, Richard Luksic, Bryan Raeburn, Alex Trpkoski (Daki Fallon 33'), Rodney Madigan, Robert Gomez (Rod Reyes 73'), Colin Luff, Norman Tome, Robert Issa, George Issa (Damien Luksic 33').
Coach: Lee Sterrey.

Referee: Alex Spiroski
Assistant Referees: Iver Vrtkovski and B. Poziewski
Fourth Official: Srebre Delovski



SOCCER NSW



Parramatta Eagles	0
Belconnen Blue Devils	0

By Greg Stock

The goal drought that is biting the Parramatta Eagles shows no signs of ending, as they allowed a ten man Belconnen side to escape from Melita Stadium with a scoreless draw on Sunday evening.

Eagles coach John Callega must surely spend his evenings praying for a striker, as his side continues to struggle in front of goal, for the third straight week unable to make any impact on the scoreboard. And it wasn't if they didn't have any opportunities, quite the contrary, as they came out of the blocks at a million miles an hour and completely dominated the first twenty minutes.

Daniel Kukucka and Adam Anderson were the chief offenders combining to miss four good chances before Belconnen could even reply. But when they did finally land a chance they gave as good as they got with Daniel Macor and Marko Perinovic lively, though neither goal-

keeper was really tested in the warm conditions.

With the game flowing along comfortably it took the send off of Blue Devils midfielder David Arranz to really tip the balance in favour of the home team.

Arranz picked up a second yellow card in the 61st minute and for the remaining half hour, his side sat behind the ball desperate to preserve their clean sheet. Callega introduced a three man forward line with Tim Gledhill joining the fray off the bench but really the Eagles looked very tame, unable to make any real inroads.

While the game itself struggled to reach any lofty heights, it was interesting to see Belconnen coach Lino Fiorese sent off by referee Greg Leverton late in the first half.

Such occurrences are extremely rare in the Premier League and even more so given Fiorese is one of the games truly nice guys, but he seemingly took exception to a rather untidy tackle by Mark Reveley on Marko Perinovic, and proceeded to watch the remainder of the game from the relative comfort of the grandstand.

With both sides still well in line for a top five spot, there was very little to come out of the game.

Coach John Callega is still hoping Santa

might bring his side a bucket load of goals, while Lino Fiorese achieved his aim of picking up a well deserved point away from home.



Daniel Macor was lively for the Blue Devils.

PARRAMATTA EAGLES 0

BELCONNEN BLUE DEVILS . . 0
at Melita Stadium, South Granville

PARRAMATTA EAGLES: Jason Holmes, Mark Reveley, Michael Kladis, Paul O'Grady, Ben Delicata, Anthony Mittiga (Malcolm Mellak), John Kelso, Matthew O'Shea, Geoff Dwyer, Adam Anderson, Daniel Kukucka (Tim Gledhill).

Coach: John Callega

BELCONNEN BLUE DEVILS: Tony Giannasca, Adrian Dowling, Oscar Zamora, Matthew Cachia, Lee Pietrukowski (Valerio Galeotti), Jaime Mauro, Stephen Kemp (Clinton Larfield), Marko Perinovic, Daniel Macor, Elliot Zwangobani, David Arranz.

Coach: Lino Fiorese

Referee: Greg Leverton

Assistant Referees: Luke Watt and Amelie Morris.

Fourth Official: Jim Nicolaou.

St George Saints	0
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	3

By Paul Goodwin

Apia may have played better football than they did on Sunday night at St George Stadium and fared far worse, but they were happy to settle for the 3-0 win over the Saints and thus avenge last season's 3-2 loss.

A game that had been fairly evenly poised, with perhaps Apia having a slight edge, was turned upside down in the 39th minute when a player from each side was shown the red card by referee Ray Isaac.

St George had already lost ace marksman Bruno Beddoni to an unfortunate ankle injury just 11 minutes into the game, but his replacement Archie Markopoulos and his original partner Jason Lal still gave a bit of cheek.

Then Orhan Dincer and Damon Langan came together in what looked a rather tame challenge, but one that drew the red card for both.

After the pair had been sent off for fighting,

the first half was quickly brought to a close.

Apia took the lead after a cross from the left by Ante Moric was not collected cleanly by Saints' keeper Con Anastasiadis and with several opposition players lurking it was Steve Karavatakis who reacted quickest and bundled the ball over the line. The game was only 63 minutes old at that stage.

A Simon Verrender header following a series of St George corners was headed off the line by Marcus Stergiopoulos in the 71st but Apia shook off this minor scare and extended their lead in the 74th.

Karavatakis broke clear through the centre and was brought down by George Maglis, with the inevitable penalty converted by Karavatakis himself.

Zlatko Arambasic failed to make the most of a Joe Moric cross in the 87th, offering his shot straight at the keeper.

Then in stoppage time Andrew Clark played a nice one two for Arambasic to make it 3-0 with a tidy finish.

St George did not deserve to lose by that margin, but once they fell behind they looked unlikely to turn things around, especially with Beddoni off the scene so early in the match.

Apia are now sitting pretty at the top of the table with their third win in as many games.

Their only dropped points in the opening round game at Fairfield, a match that Tigers' coach Les de Celis feels was more of a final trial match for his players, given their limited preparation.



Sam La Rocca (left) and Ali Salim (right) vie for the ball.

ST GEORGE SAINTS 0
A.P.I.A.-LEICHHARDT TIGERS 3
(Steve Karavatakis 61', 75' pen, Z Arambasic 92')
at St George Stadium, Rockdale

ST GEORGE: 1 Con Anastasiadis, 2 Sebastian Sinozic, 16 Luke McDougall, 4 Evangelos Petratos, 6 Jose Mendez, 12 Simon Verrender, 7 George Maglis (20 Justin Ashley), 8 Orhan Dincer, 9 Jason Lal, 10 Bruno Beddoni (11 Archie Markopoulos 11), 13 Ali Salim (3 Nick Bollandis 78).

Subs not used: 14 Brad Campbell, 18 Michael Xuereb (RGK)

Coach: Manny Spanoudakis

A.P.I.A.-LEICHHARDT TIGERS: 1 Bob Camm, 17 Paul Dee, 3 Josip Moric, 5 Marcus Stergiopoulos, 15 Damon Langan, 18 Ante Moric (16 Tony Tesoro 64), 12 Jeremy Brown, 7 Sam La Rocca (5 Michael Galluzzo 63), 19 Andrew Clark, 9 Zlatko Arambasic, 10 Steve Karavatakis (14 John Paul Boutros 76). **Subs not used:** 20 Murray Nelson (RGK)

Coach: Les De Celis

Referee: Ray Isaac

Assistant Referees: Terry Goodhew and Peter Verinder

Fourth Official: David Finlay

Yellow Cards: St George: Luke McDougall 55; Apia Leichhardt: Tony Tesoro 64, Zlatko Arambasic 88

Red Cards: Damon Langan (Apia) and Orhan Dincer (St George) both 39

FROM THE SIDELINES By Greg Stock

*The judiciary will be doing a roaring trade this week with six players and two coaches given their marching orders in some very physical round four action over the weekend. The list includes Damon Langan (A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt), Orhan Dincer (St. George), Michael Hawrysiuk (Bonnyrigg White Eagles), David Arranz (Belconnen Blue Devils), Bryan Raeburn and Rodney Madigan (Bankstown City). It's not often that you see a coach asked to vacate the dugout, let alone twice in one evenings worth of football, but both Lino Fiorese and Manny Spanoudakis picked up red cards, forcing them to watch the remainder of their games from the back of the grandstand.

*St. George Soccer Association President Ross Gardner today announced the signing of a \$70,000 two year major sponsorship with mortgage originator Sydney Home Loans. The agreement will see Sydney Home Loans as the primary sponsor for the clubs representative programme including both boys and girls youth league teams as well as the mens and women's senior State League sides.

"This is a major step forward," said Ross Gardner, "and our ability to secure multi year sponsorship contracts ensures annuity revenue streams and allows us to plan ahead. We believe we have put in place a business and marketing plan that we believe will bring stability back to the club and reestablish St. George as a force at both

Youth League and Senior level over the next three years." In other club news midfielder Max Sevares will be out until the new year with a chronic hamstring injury. New father Archie Markopoulos is also another suffering hamstring problems, and he is a week to week proposition.

*Winter Super League outfit MSC Liverpool unveiled their new coaching lineup for season 2003 announcing former AC United boss Paul Carter as their new first grade coach. The former Socceroo international replaces Lee Sterrey who has moved over to Bankstown City Lions after taking over from Brian Dene midway through last season.

"It's a fantastic opportunity" said Carter, "and I firmly believe we can put together a strong side and move up the ladder in 2003." Carter is joined by longtime Assistant Coach Richard Lasek and will be supported by ex Belmore Hercules and Stanmore Hawks coach Chris Karasis as Coaching Director. "I have worked successfully with both Richard and Chris in the past and I'm genuinely excited by having them on board for 2003."

*Canterbury-Marrickville coach Greg Woodhouse has had a rather up and down start to the season culminating in his sides 2-1 win to former club Bonnyrigg on Saturday night. But Woodhouse isn't getting too downhearted, knowing his team would take time to gel in the opening rounds of the competition. "We have got fourteen new

players at the club, plus three new coaches" said Woodhouse, "and I always expected us to be well short of our best till christmas. I'm very happy with what I am seeing each week both on the field and the training paddock and our win against Bonnyrigg was especially pleasing as I felt we played well." The former Socceroo goalkeeper made special mention of midfielder Michael O'Riley, after a couple of terrific performances against Central Coast and Rockdale. The former Ryde City and A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt junior was released at the end of the last season before ending up at preseason trials at Henson Park. "He is a terrific kid, trains hard and improves every week" said Woodhouse. "and he is quickly turning into a quality midfielder."

*From the Sidelines would like to extend our congratulations to former Stanmore Hawks head coach Ross Anton on his wedding last Sunday to longtime girlfriend Mary. In front of an illustrious group of well-wishers including the likes of George Lazarou, Eddie Briscoe, Ian Gillan and the larger than life goalkeeper Theo Theodoulou, the happy couple celebrated their reception in Bankstown before heading out on their honeymoon to Queensland.

*Bonnyrigg will be without the services of Freddy Umlil for approximately four weeks after he announced plans to head to Austria for trials over christmas. Dong Ki-

Kim is also another casualty and by all reports has moved to Queensland to start his own soccer academy.

*Fresh from their 4-1 demolition over 'arch rivals' Bankstown City on Saturday night, the Suns backed up on Sunday evening at the Rockdale Ilinden Sports Centre to play visiting Macedonian clubs side Vardar Skopje. While the match did go to the visitors 1-0, Rockdale did give a good account of themselves with the likes of Spase Najdovski, Peter Apolevski, Peter Trajceviski, Ghenadie Costiuc and Robert Todorovski backing up for their second game in two days.

Fans wanting to see Vardar in their remaining games can catch them against Bankstown City at Jensen Park tonight (Tuesday) or at John Crehan Park in Cringila on Wednesday night against the Wollongong Wolves. In the other tour match Vardar knocked over Melbourne clubs side Preston Lions 4-2 on Saturday evening.

*When compiling the stats for the preview of matches for this week, it was interesting to note that A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt have not beaten Parramatta Eagles in a league game since before 1996. Since the Eagles reentered the state league for season 1996 they have won four of their past seven meetings with three draws. Given that Parramatta have only scored one goal from general play in 360 minutes of competition football, A.P.I.A. might finally get their chance to post a win!



SOCCER NSW



ROUND 4 RESULTS

FIRST GRADE

Blacktown City Demons2 (K Rastall 38', L Roodenburg 76')	Central Coast Coasties1 (S Matthews 87')	Bonnyrigg White Eagles1 (K Agwu 75')
Fairfield Bulls1 (M Hoenselaars 78')	Penrith Panthers0	Canterbury-Marrickville Olympic ..2 (P Bourke 30/70')
Rockdale City Suns4 (B Deighan 9', S Najdoski 20/28', D Alilovic 64')	Parramatta Eagles0	St George Saints0
Bankstown City Lions1 (C Luff 42')	Belconnen Blue Devils0	A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers3 (S Karavatakis 61'/75' (pen), Z Arambasic 92')

UNDER 19

Blacktown City Demons5 (D Storey 28', R Galayini 50', R Hartshorn 71/81', L Newton 83')	Central Coast Coasties1 (M Mitchell 24')	Bonnyrigg White Eagles1 (D Savic 84')
Fairfield Bulls0	Penrith Panthers3 (M McCrory 6', C Lima 84', M Noro 89')	Canterbury-Marrickville Olympic ..4 (J Tsironis 43', B Boardman 70', M Mikhail 80, W Hijazi 90')
Rockdale City Suns2 (P Talcevski 15', B Mate 26')	Parramatta Eagles1 (M Kassis 2')	St George Saints1 (A Chahine 87')
Bankstown City Lions2 (M Kajtez 33', R Reyes 63')	Belconnen Blue Devils1 (D Matic 49')	A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers3 (C Musumeci 51'/71', N Moulds 54')

FIRST GRADE

UNDER 19

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers	4	3	1	0	8	3	10
Central Coast Coasties	4	2	2	0	4	1	8
Blacktown City Demons	4	2	1	1	5	4	7
Rockdale City Suns	4	2	0	2	6	5	6
C/bury M/ville Olympic	4	1	2	1	4	4	5
Belconnen Blue Devils	4	1	2	1	3	3	5
Parramatta Eagles	4	1	2	1	2	2	5
Penrith Panthers	4	1	1	2	4	4	4
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	4	1	1	2	5	6	4
Fairfield Bulls	4	1	1	2	5	8	4
Bankstown City Lions	4	1	1	2	3	6	4
St George Saints	4	1	0	3	4	7	3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Blacktown City Demons	4	4	0	0	20	3	12
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers	4	4	0	0	10	3	12
Parramatta Eagles	4	2	2	0	10	4	8
Penrith Panthers	4	2	1	1	8	5	7
Rockdale City Suns	4	2	1	1	9	7	7
Belconnen Blue Devils	4	2	1	1	8	6	7
C/bury M/ville Olympic	4	2	0	2	12	8	6
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	4	1	0	3	5	9	3
St George Saints	4	1	0	3	4	8	3
Bankstown City Lions	4	0	2	2	4	13	2
Central Coast Coasties	4	0	1	3	4	14	1
Fairfield Bulls	4	0	0	4	2	16	0

NEXT ROUND

ROUND 5 FIRST GRADE

HOME TEAM	AWAY TEAM	DATE	KICK-OFF	GROUND
Belconnen Blue Devils	v Blacktown City Demons	Sat 21 Dec	7.00pm	McKellar SC
Penrith Panthers	v Rockdale City Suns	Sat 21 Dec	7.00pm	Andrews Road Field
Bankstown City Lions	v C'bury-M'ville Olympic	Sun 22 Dec	6.00pm	Jensen Park
Fairfield Bulls	v Central Coast Coasties	Sun 22 Dec	6.00pm	Nineveh Field
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	v Parramatta Eagles	Sun 22 Dec	6.00pm	Lambert Park
St George Saints	v Bonnyrigg White Eagles	Sun 22 Dec	6.00pm	St George Stadium

UNDER 19

HOME TEAM	AWAY TEAM	DATE	KICK-OFF	GROUND
Belconnen Blue Devils	v Blacktown City Demons	Sat 21 Dec	4.30pm	McKellar SC
Penrith Panthers	v Rockdale City Suns	Sat 21 Dec	5.00pm	Andrews Road Field
Bankstown City Lions	v C'bury-M'ville Olympic	Sun 22 Dec	4.00pm	Jensen Park
Fairfield Bulls	v Central Coast Coasties	Sun 22 Dec	4.00pm	Nineveh Field
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	v Parramatta Eagles	Sun 22 Dec	4.00pm	Lambert Park
St George Saints	v Bonnyrigg White Eagles	Sun 22 Dec	4.00pm	St George Stadium

TOP GOALSCORERS

- 3 - Zlatko Arambasic (APIA-Leichhardt)
- 2 - Paul Bourke (Canterbury-Marrickville), Rod Hutchinson (Penrith Panthers), Steve Karavatakis (A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt), Shane Knight (Bonnyrigg White Eagles), Ante Moric (A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt), Spase Najdoski (Rockdale City Suns), Marko Perinovic (Belconnen Blue Devils), Luke Roodenberg (Blacktown City)
- 1 - Kindness Agwu (Bonnyrigg White Eagles), Denis Alilovic (Rockdale City Suns), Adam Anderson (Parramatta Eagles), Robert Angievski (Fairfield Bulls), Ismael Arrarte (Fairfield Bulls), Bruno Beddoni (St. George), Daniel Borg (Parramatta Eagles), Mathew Borg (Fairfield Bulls), Jon-Paul Boutros (APIA-Leichhardt), Luke Boyd (Penrith Panthers), Joe Bruni (Bonnyrigg White Eagles), Simon Catanzaro (Blacktown City), Mitchell Cook (Central Coast), Ben Deighan (Rockdale City Suns), Mark Falzon (Central Coast), Michael Hawrysiuk (Bonnyrigg White Eagles), Marc Hoenselaars (Fairfield Bulls), George Issa (Bankstown City), Jason Lal (St. George), Clinton Larfield (Belconnen Blue Devils), Colin Luff (Bankstown City), Sean Mathews (Central Coast), Jose Mendes (St. George), James Monie (Central Coast), Michael O'Riley (Canterbury-Marrickville), Alan Picken (Canterbury-Marrickville), Kain Rastall (Blacktown City), Jason Sciberras (Penrith Panthers), Robert Todorovski (Rockdale City Suns), Norman Tome (Bankstown City Lions), Luke Tomich (Fairfield Bulls), Simon Verrender (St. George)

For all the latest news, results and information check out www.nswpremierleague.com



SOCCER NSW



ROUND 5 PREVIEW



Belconnen Blue Devils

VS

Blacktown City Demons



Saturday 21st December, 2002 — 7.00pm
MCKELLAR SOCCER CENTRE, MCKELLAR

The Blacktown machine is slowly starting to gain some serious momentum and with new signing Luke Roodenberg now starting to find the net, the Demons are a difficult commodity.

Their coach Brian Brown was an interested spectator at the Parramatta Eagles v Belconnen game hoping to learn a few secrets ahead of a tough match. "Belconnen are a very tough side home or away, and given it's a tough road trip down there they'll definitely start the match as favourites" said Brown. "Our game against Bankstown City aside, our form has been steadily improving and

we are starting to put together some good performances which is pleasing and I'm quietly confident we'll give a good account of ourselves."

The Demons side will also be staying overnight in the nations capital, and use the weekend away as a morale booster ahead of a difficult schedule after Christmas. Dion Valle will be rushed back into the side after missing the Bulls game with illness, while Damien Foxe is in doubt with a knee problem and Ben Willard with a hamstring strain. Paul Yates could find his way back into the defence if either player is ruled out.

Belconnen took the road trip to

Melita Stadium last weekend, and given their previous form there, would have been exceptionally happy at taking home a point. David Arranz was given his marching orders by referee Greg Leverton and will automatically miss the visit of Blacktown with suspension. Fiorese waiting till the end of the week before naming a replacement.

History doesn't favour the Blue Devils, having never posted a win against the Demons in four league meetings, and on this point alone, it's difficult seeing them getting anything other than a point in their last game prior to Christmas.



Penrith Panthers

VS

Rockdale City Suns



Saturday 21st December, 2002 — 7.00pm
ANDREWS ROAD FIELD, PENRITH

Penrith have started the season in reasonable fashion and are more than capable of springing a surprise on the visiting Suns this week.

Goalkeeper Chad Taylor is back and despite the loss of Peter Bennett overseas, coach Tony Rasmussen is confident of a bold showing this week.

"The boys have been playing with a lot of character in recent weeks and I am very happy with what I am seeing" said Rasmussen. "One thing we have been working hard on is our defence and not conceding any cheap goals."

Last year we would play well for the majority of a game, but concede the easy goal when it counted. This year it's a different story and it's been the main factor in helping us become a more competitive team. Any side predicting an easy game from us can expect to be in for a rude shock."

The Suns bounced back from two early losses to record a couple of strong victories in the past two games. The pressure on coach Mile Todorovski has eased considerably and he'll have only one thing on his mind when he ventures west, all three points.

Defender Alex Kotevich still

remains sidelined with an ankle injury while Eddie Wong and Denis Alilovic will be given late fitness tests before the game, both suffering with leg problems. Defender Vadim Mikoutski continues to come along well but whether Todorovski risks his fitness to include him on the bench or play him in the under 19s is debatable.

This match will be the first time these two clubs have met in a Premier League fixture, and with both sides lining up at close to full strength a draw is most probably the likely result.



Bankstown City Lions

VS

C'bury-M'ville Olympic



Sunday 22nd December, 2002 — 6.00pm
JENSEN PARK, SEFTON

Bankstown coach Lee Sterrey, may need to ring in a few changes to his side that fell victim to Rockdale City Suns the previous week.

If you went by the form guide at the start of the season, the Lions should not be sitting second from the bottom four rounds in.

Injuries to key players, have not helped their cause, but Lee knows excuses like that don't sit well with supporters who are expecting results.

Canterbury on the other hand registered their first win of the season and have climbed from last to fifth!

The form of Paul Bourke has been a revelation for the Berries in recent weeks. Coupled with the work-rate of Andy Amegashie things are finally turning around for coach Greg Woodhouse.

But things won't be easy for Woodhouse and his youthful outfit. It's never good to face up against a team of champions coming off an emotional loss. The Berries will need to pool their collective maturity and experience to overcome a quality outfit such as Bankstown City Lions.

Coach Sterrey still believes that the best is yet to be seen from his newly assembled team of champions.

Whether or not they will form a champion team in the new year, only time will tell.

Bankstown hasn't beaten Canterbury since 1996 when they won 5-1. In their last 10 meetings Bankstown have won once with six losses and three draws Ralph Bove should be back from a calf injury.

Bankstown will have to lift to beat a young Canterbury outfit coming off a good win against Bonnyrigg.

A win for Bankstown will make their Christmas / New Year enjoyable but if they lose, can expect lumps of coal in their stocking from the committee.



Fairfield Bulls

VS

Central Coast Coasties



Sunday 22nd December, 2002 — 6.00pm
NINEVEH FIELD, EDENSOR PARK

Still unbeaten after four outings the Coasties will certainly make the Bulls work hard for the points this Sunday.

They have enjoyed success on this ground before; in fact it seems to be a lucky venue for the Coasties who so far have demonstrated that while they may not carry many guns up front, they do know how to compete.

The Bulls are not to be discounted, however, with their win over Parramatta on this ground at their most recent outing proof of their credentials.

Perhaps if Fairfield can get back Glenn Sprod and see some form from twin strikers Marc Hoenselaars and

Matt Borg then they may well bring the young Coasties unbeaten run to an end.

Far from being at the foot of the ladder the new-look visitors are looking down on the other sides from the opposite end of the table. It must feel good to John McLafferty and his young team.

Now that Pat Bradley is back in the side and the depth has allowed the Coasties to keep fresh legs on the park, there is no reason why they cannot carry on the good work here at Nineveh Field.

The Bulls have been unbeaten in two outings and looked good in patches against the powerful

Blacktown City at The Gabbie last weekend.

The Coasties have won just once in three tries at Nineveh Field and that was back in 2000 when they managed a 3-1 success. In six meetings overall the Bulls have won four and the Coasties the other two.

With Fairfield having three of last seasons Coasties' squad in their first grade team a hard game is expected.

Peter Preston and Peter Haynes, both recovering from injury, are 50/50 chances of playing but Marc Falzon, is almost certain to miss the match with a leg muscle injury.



A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers

VS

Parramatta Eagles



Sunday 22nd December, 2002 — 6.00pm
LAMBERT PARK, (MARION ST), LEICHHARDT

With 6-3 and 4-1 losses to the Eagles in the last two meetings at Lambert Park Apia may well go into Sunday's game against Parramatta with some trepidation.

They also go into it without key defender Damon Langan, likely to be suspended after being sent off in the St George game.

Parramatta have not been scoring goals this term and are clearly missing the likes of Jimmy Bakis and Daniel Cummins.

The defence is as tight as ever, so the Tigers may find it very hard to fashion a winner this time too.

Apia has not beaten the Eagles in any league game since 1996.

Four of the last seven meetings have been won by the Eagles and all the others have been draws.

In NSW matches A.P.I.A. have not beaten Melita at Lambert Park since 1970 when they won 4-2.

Some NSL meetings since then have included mixed fortunes, but generally the honours seem to have been with the visitors.

It may all be different this time.

Zlatko Arambasic and Steve Karavatakis have now both begun to find their shooting boots so perhaps

Jason Holmes will be given a torrid time this Sunday?

It needs Tim Gledhill to get settled into his new team and to see if he has coped with the rise in class before Parramatta can look seriously at making claims to retain their title.

A win here would go a long way to achieving that. But as John Callega knows only too well to win games you must score more goals than your opponents. In actual fact John will be satisfied with just scoring any goals.

Unfortunately for John an A.P.I.A. victory is most likely on present form.



St George Saints

VS

Bonnyrigg White Eagles



Sunday 22nd December, 2002 — 6.00pm
ST GEORGE STADIUM, ROCKDALE

St. George were the latest victim to be chewed up by the A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt juggernaut 3-0 at home last weekend, but for them, it doesn't get any easier entertaining Bonnyrigg this week.

Coach Manny Spanoudakis will be without the services of three of his biggest names, Max Sevaes (hamstring out till early January), Bruno Beddoni (ankle, likely to miss a week) and Orhan Dincer (suspended) and will have to reshuffle his squad to fill the gaps.

The only good to come out of the loss was the form of new father Archie Markopoulos who came back

from a hamstring problem playing a valuable fifteen minutes or so off the bench. It's expected he will regain one of the starting spots with Spanoudakis likely draft in a couple of his Under 19 players.

By their usual lofty standards, Bonnyrigg haven't exactly hit top form, and there are a couple of question marks hanging over Ljube Jancev's team.

One win and one draw from four starts is hardly flattering form, and Jancev will need to start the ball rolling this week, less the White Eagles get too far behind in the chase for a top three spot.

They will have to do it tough this week with Michael Hawrysiuk (suspended), Joe Bruni (ankle), and Freddy Umlil (overseas) all missing. Fernando Pellegrino, Bobby Dragas and Alex Asanovic are the likely replacements, with the White Eagles still yet to play their best eleven at any stage this year owing to suspensions and injuries.

In the corresponding match last year, Bonnyrigg spanked the Saints 5-0, in emphatic fashion, and although these are two new sides, the quiet tip is for the White Eagles to squeak home in a close one.



Women's National Soccer League



QUEENSLAND STING ...1

(Belinda Dawney 40')

NSW SAPPHIRES0

at Carmichael Park, Brisbane

By Janene Mar and Adam Mark

QUEENSLAND TAKE WNSL CROWN

The tale of opposing fortunes is never better illustrated than the scenes that immediately follow the final whistle of a grandfinal. Within the story told at Women's Soccer Queensland's new headquarters Carmichael Park on Saturday night was etched two starkly different tales — the home side Sting enraptured by a performance which retained them their perfect record in WNSL grandfinals, winning three from three, an impressive statistic indeed. The visitors NSW Sapphires slumped and distraught that the unthinkable had just occurred, a third straight grandfinal loss.

Belinda Dawney's goal late in the first half had given Queensland Sting a deserved 1-0 victory in this season's WNSL decider over NSW Sapphires, making the emaroons the first team to achieve a third national league crown in the league's seven year existence.

The Queenslanders won two seasons ago (2000/01 against NSW) and were the first ever champions in 1996/97.

NSW Sapphires had also been chasing their third league title, but the Sting lay ready and waiting for them.

Queensland Sting made their presence felt from the opening whistle with some lively attacking moves, and remained the main attacking force overall. NSW Sapphires, after a slow start, settled into the game but had trouble penetrating a solid opponent.

It was a good quality first half, particularly in the first and last ten minutes, played at breakneck speed and with plenty of goalmouth action and skill. There were fewer highlights in a tense second half, play entangled for much of the time in the middle of the park.

Queensland Sting had two great chances in the first three minutes, former New South Welshman Heather Garriock providing a pinpoint cross but captain Kate McShea found the ball ricochet off her shin in front of goal. Belinda Dawney was next released behind the defence with a fantastic long kick from keeper Claire Nichols, but she skied the chance over the bar.

Several more close chances to the Sting still went unrewarded, NSW goalkeeper Cassandra Kell holding against the onslaught. Queensland worked the ball both through the middle of the park and up the flanks to frequently trouble the Sapphires defence. Dawney led the charge, her speed and punch opening up a path for several chances on goal.

A rare open opportunity to NSW came in the 38th minute, but keeper Nichols got down well to the Sarah Walsh attempt.

Two minutes later and five minutes before the break, Queensland were finally rewarded with the timely lead. A long ball from midfield saw the onrushing Dawney shrug off her opponent, continue her run to collect the loose ball and ignore the presence of a second defender and finish in clinical style from with an angled strike from the right of goal.

NSW Sapphires lifted in the second half with a better defensive effort and rallied for the equaliser but with little reward. Their frustrations were best illustrated with a great chance in the 70th minute which was headed off the goalline.

Queensland suffered worrying injuries to both Garriock and substitute Alicia Ferguson (in only her fourth appearance back from knee reconstruction), but managed to hold out for the final whistle to celebrate the coveted victory.

Sting coach Mike Mulvey was elated with the performance. "This is a sweet end to a very good season - it was a tremendous effort. We had at least eight shots before we scored, and the goal was deserved from our work rate and creativity. NSW came out as expected in the second half but we weathered the storm."

Sapphires coach, Alen Stajic, was obviously disappointed by the

result. "The Sting played the better football in the first half, but I thought we came back in the second and created a few chances to equalise, but couldn't get that all important final touch."

When asked to consider the season overall for the Sapphires, Stajic was positive about his teams performance. "If you take into account, we had four of our more talented players missing for some or all of the season (Kelly Golebiowski, Joanne Peters, Julie Murray and Thea Slatyer) and other players, like Taryn Rockall, returning from serious injury, I'm extremely pleased that we got to the Grand Final.

This season has allowed some of younger players to gain valuable matches under their belts, and players like Michelle Carney, Jo Burgess and Kathryn Collins have been able to establish themselves in the starting eleven. When you look at that way, things auger well for the future," concluded Stajic.

QUEENSLAND STING: Claire Nichols, Sarah Garven, Karla Reuter, Pam Grant, Kate McShea (c), Heather Garriock (Elissia Canham 75), Bryony Duus (Olivia Hohnke 90), April Mann, Lana Harch, Natalie Thomas (Alicia Ferguson 78) (Jessica Mitchell 87), Belinda Dawney.

Subs not used: Alannah Reed.

Cautions: nil

NSW SAPPHIRES: Cassandra Kell, Anissa Tann, Lisa Warrenner (Thea Slatyer 46), Kathryn Collins, Michelle Carney, Nicole Kimber (Leah Blayney 78), Taryn Rockall (c), Kylie Ledbrook, Joanne Burgess, Danielle Small, Sarah Walsh (Lisa Gilbert 65).

Subs not used: Catherine Cannuli, Julie Murray.

Cautions: Kell 45

Referee: Krystyna Szokolai.

Assistant Referees: Rebecca Brose, Amanda Robinson.

Fourth Official: Lynda Arkinstall.

Crowd: 1,300



NSW Sapphires-2002/03 WNSL Runners Up.

WNSL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
QUEENSLAND STING	10	8	-	2	26	7	19	24
NSW SAPPHIRES	10	5	3	2	21	14	7	18
CANBERRA ECLIPSE	10	4	4	2	14	8	6	16
ADELAIDE SENSATION	10	3	3	4	14	20	-6	12
NORTHERN NSW PRIDE	10	3	1	6	18	28	-10	10
VICTORIA VISION	10	1	1	8	5	21	-16	4

LEADING GOALSCORERS 2002/03

9	Lisa DE VANNA	Adelaide Sensation
5	Kate McSHEA	Queensland Sting
4	Taryn ROCKALL	NSW Sapphires
4	Katie GILL	Northern NSW Pride
4	Ashley WILSON	Northern NSW Pride
4	Tal KARP	Canberra Eclipse
4	Amber NEILSON	Northern NSW Pride



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PESA announce link with KSA

After many months of negotiations, Sydney based Parramatta Eagles Soccer Academy (PESA), are pleased to announce an affiliation with the Kings Soccer Academy (KSA), and situated in Perth.

The deal comes as Manchester United look to strengthen ties with the Oceania region and follows the signing of a five-year agreement with the highly successful Parramatta Eagles set-up last year, as "The official youth development partners of Manchester United in Oceania."

The affiliation with Kings Soccer Academy marks the commencement of PESA's strategy to involve other quality Soccer Academies in the Oceania region in its youth development program with Manchester United.

"We have been very impressed with the quality of the people at KSA, the forward planning of its executive team, the quality of their football infrastructure and its absolute focus on developing elite youth football talent in Western Australia" said Don Allan, Chairman of PESA.

"We will be announcing similar affiliations with leading Soccer

Academies in other states of Australia and the Oceania region very shortly. Our activities are directed at raising the level of football education for elite players in our region of the world by utilising the coaching methods and support of Manchester United. In a short period of time, we have witnessed first hand at PESA, how effective the Manchester United coaching curriculum is and the immediate benefit it has provided our Academy players."

According to Mitch Doherty, the coaching director of the K.S.A "We believe this agreement is an excellent opportunity for future development of W.A. youth soccer players and will have a lasting beneficial effect on the game here for many years to come."

"An important factor in this agreement is that the majority of our players will stay and play in W.A., and that we will continue to support local initiatives where we believe it is in the interest of the player or the local soccer scene."

"The aim and objective of the agreement we have entered into is to offer a career path to the very top of the professional game, to strengthen relations between W.A. soccer, the youth system in New South Wales,

and the European game. We firmly believe that an association with the biggest 'football' club in the world, Manchester United, who hold a reputation for worlds best practice youth development systems can only benefit our local talent."

Amongst the benefits offered to the Kings Academy will be access to the latest training techniques using drills and sessions developed and put in practice at Manchester United. The academy will also run coaching clinics throughout the state with the assistance of Parramatta Eagles."

"We have an opportunity to benchmark our players, with the best Australia has to offer, through the arrangement with Parramatta Eagles in Sydney, then, if any of our players fits the Manchester United profile, there is no limit on how far they can go."

The Kings Academy have so far exceeded all our expectations due in the main to the quality of people involved in administering and running the club. However we all realize that in terms of junior soccer clubs in Western Australia, we are still in our infancy and that we have a great deal yet to learn and a long way to go to reach our goals.

Starting season 2003 associated with one of the biggest names in world soccer, will certainly go a long way to assisting us to achieve our vision"

It is without doubt a fantastic opportunity for all our players and staff and everyone involved with the club are extremely excited about the future prospects"

Some of the immediate benefits of this association will see the Kings squads playing in the famous Manchester United colors of red and white, the squads will fine tune their techniques and skills using drills and sessions created and orchestrated by some of Europe finest coaches.

"Interstate games against some of Australia's finest talents will no longer be an unreachable dream and all the players at the Kings Soccer Academy will be exposed to a program, designed to develop not only soccer skills, but also social skills, physical qualities, and mental strength, altogether culminating in young athletes who we expect will leave the academy, equipped with the tools to progress to future success.



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J-P's Coaching Tips

Thank you to everyone who has given feed back regarding this column.

J-P's Coaching Tips will return in the new year bigger and better than ever.

If you have any questions or suggestions for this column please feel free to email me, jp@soccernsw.com.au

That all for this year
until next year
have a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

Jean-Paul de Marigny
Coaching and Development Manager
Soccer NSW

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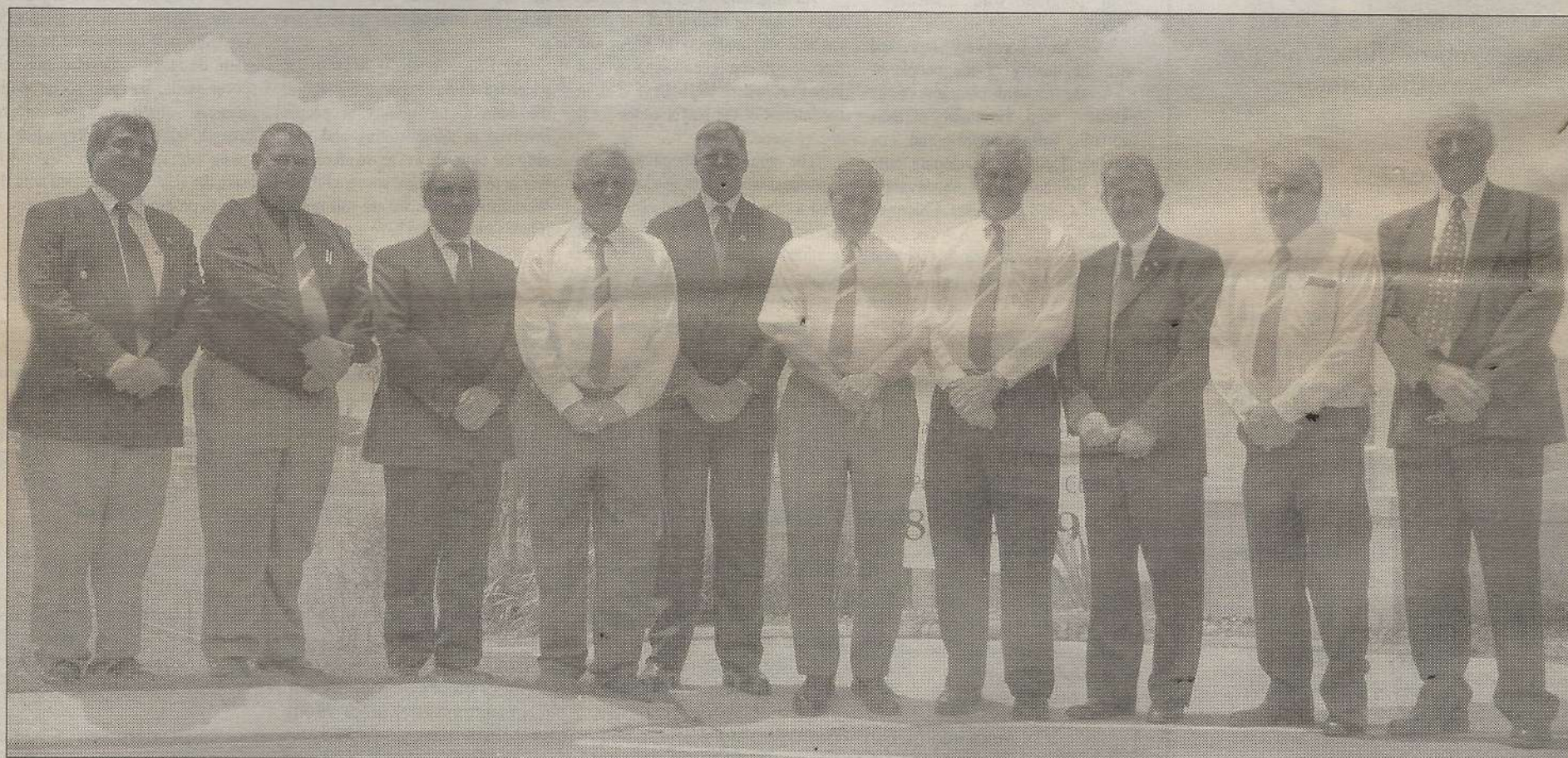


SOCCER NSW



The Board extend it's appreciation to all who have worked so tirelessly over the years to achieve Saturday's historic vote on unification.

Unification is a partnership of the NSW Soccer Federation and NSW Amateur Soccer Federation who have joined to work together for the good of the game.



Mr Tom A. Doumanis (President and Chair of the Council of Clubs), Mr Jim Forrest (Vice-President and Chair of the Council of Associations), Mr Howard Bradley, Mr Robert Clark, Mr David Goodman, Mr Ross Kelly, Mr Rob Laws, Mr Jim Ronis, Mr Ray Tweedie and Mr Frank Wilson.

Dedication of the Charles Valentine Building

On Saturday the 14th of December, following the historic decision to unify the code in NSW, a ceremony was held to dedicate the newly completed administration building to long time NSW Soccer supporter and patron, Charles Valentine. Charles was unable to attend the event, but his wife, Joan Valentine, and nephew, Tony Valentine, represented the man who has given so much to the game of soccer in NSW.



Joan Valentine unveils the new plaque on the Charles Valentine Building as John Constantine, Tom A. Doumanis, Peter Gray and John Thomson look on.

ITALIAN SERIE A

ITALIAN AFFAIR

By Joe Russo

In 1987 and 1990 they won the Serie A league title (Scudetto). In 1988 they finished second to AC Milan and in 1989 they won the UEFA Cup. Today they languish in second last place in Italy's Serie B and are real Third Division prospects at this stage.

It is hard to believe that it is the same club but it is. The club is Napoli - yes, the same Napoli that the great Diego Maradona played for between 1984 and 1991.

Like the little genius' career, it was all downhill for the club once he left. For a short while they had another little player that pleased the fans.

He was Gianfranco Zola, now in the twilight of his career at Chelsea. However, his Napoli days must seem like an eternity ago. Zola, unlike his former club, is still playing some fantastic football.

Napoli as a club, Naples as a city and the Neapolitan people, all live in the past. In January this year I saw a motor scooter in Naples with Maradona's face painted on the front. There was also a street seller who still had Maradona posters for sale.

The little man, arguably the greatest player of all time, last graced the city 11 years ago. Nevertheless you could still find someone who was making money from his image and someone else who was interested in reminding other motorists (even though they all fondly remember) that Naples was once Maradona's home city.

Today this club is in the doldrums and it will take another Maradona, if such a feat is ever possible, to lift them out. Years of mismanagement and internal fighting, has virtually brought the club to its knees.

Franco Colomba, formerly of Vicenza and Reggina, is the current coach and the person that most fans seem to hold accountable.

Napoli in their last five games have only managed two home draws and three resounding away defeats. Two points from a possible 15 is simply not good for most fans.

Napoli's only hope of avoiding dropping to the Third Division is if either a miracle occurs or another Maradona is found very quickly. However, the word 'likely' doesn't appear to fit into the equation at this stage.

◆◆◆

It seems that AC Milan's golden run is set to continue. They lead the Serie A table and are on maximum points in Group C of the Champions League after last week's away win over Borussia Dortmund.

In freezing conditions in Germany it was Filippo Inzaghi's goal that separated the teams. Their fans will be hoping that this side can emulate some of the great AC Milan sides of the not too distant past.

Juventus at home had little trouble disposing of Swiss side FC Basel. It was Juve's tenth consecutive positive result in the Champions League - nine wins and one draw.

FC Basel were without former Perth Glory player Ivan Ergic while Juventus coach, Marcello Lippi, continues to use French striker David Trezeguet who is on the comeback trail.

Ajax Amsterdam at home beat Roma who are now struggling on all fronts. Despite the one goal margin it was the Roma performance, or lack thereof, that has once again attracted attention.

It looks likely that Roma will now exit from the Champions League after what the Italian media described as a spineless performance. Roma were accused of surrendering.

The first goal they conceded will not be one that their keeper, Francesco Antonioli, will want to see too often. It bounced off his head straight onto his opponent's feet!

Roma were described as nervous and demoralised in some match reports. The Champions League now resumes in February and Roma will be hoping that they can turn it all around by then.

Finally, at the San Siro in Milan, Inter who led Bayer Leverkusen by two goals thanks to their hero on the night midfielder Gigi Di Biagio, almost let the game slip away. In the end a three-two result could well have been a three-all draw.

On the whole three wins out of four matches was another very positive result for Italian teams in the Champions League. Perhaps some people (this column included) decided to write off Italian club teams a little too quickly.



Chievo Verona's first goalscorer Ivano Della Morte (left) in action against Piacenza.

PIACENZA 0 CHIEVO 3

Chievo had gone fourth earlier in the day with a convincing 3-0 win at Piacenza. There was little promise in a goalless first half, but Ivano della Morte put the Verona outfit in front after 49 minutes and they held off Piacenza before extending their lead with four minutes left to play.

German Oliver Bierhoff got the second goal, and a third from Sergio Pellissier in the last minute made the scoreline flattering for Luigi del Neri's visitors who moved above Juventus.

BOLOGNA 2 PARMA 1

Bologna moved level on points with Chievo and Juventus as they fought back from conceding an early goal to beat Parma 2-1 on Saturday night and maintain their push for a place in Europe next season.

Brazilian Adriano had fired Parma into a 27th-minute lead, but it was another South American who came to the home side's rescue.

Argentinian Julio Cruz pulled them back onto level terms in the 40th minute and added a second two minutes later.

Parma probed after half-time, but they were unable to get an equaliser.

COMO 1 AC MILAN 2

AC Milan stayed top of the Serie A with a 2-1 win over bottom-placed Como on Sunday. Massimo Ambrosini put Milan 1-0 up after 20 minutes but Fabio Pecchia pulled lowly Como back level within a minute.

Ukrainian superstar Andrei Shevchenko then provided the winner just three minutes before half-time.

Defender Alessandro Nesta played the ball forward to Pippo Inzaghi, who brought it down and pulled it back for Massimo Ambrosini to shoot home from the edge of the area.



Filippo Inzaghi of AC Milan in action against Como Calcio.

But Como carved out an equaliser just seconds later.

French midfielder Benoit Cauet, who played four seasons with Milan's arch-rivals Inter, shot from 25 metres to force a save from Milan keeper Dida.

But the Brazilian could only parry the ball and Pecchia tapped home from close range.

Milan grabbed a second goal when Rivaldo sent in a corner, Ambrosini flicked on and Shevchenko was on hand to head home.

JUVENTUS 1 LAZIO 2

Stefano Fiore was the Lazio hero with two goals as Roberto Mancini's team fought back to beat Juventus and prove, if proof was still needed, that they are in the title hunt.

The former Udinese winger doubled his season's tally with goals in the 35th and 50th minutes.

Pavel Nedved, a former Lazio player, had put Juve ahead in the 34th minute, but their lead was short-lived.

INTER 1 ATALANTA 0

Mohammed Kallon scored a minute after coming off the bench as Inter Milan won the battle of the Nerazzurri.

The Sierra Leone striker netted a 70th-minute winner to keep up Inter's title challenge after fellow front-men Hernan Crespo and Alvaro Recoba has failed to make a breakthrough.

Kallon looked to be running out of options as he ran across the edge of the penalty area, with a gang of Atalanta defenders chasing him.

But he paused, swivelled his body 90 degrees, and lashed a fierce shot into the top right corner, with Taibi grasping at the bitterly cold Milan air.

BRESCIA 3 PERUGIA 1

A late penalty by Roberto Baggio put the finishing touches on Brescia's victory over Perugia.

Baggio scored from the spot two minutes from time to add to two goals by Igli Tare in the first half.

Fabrizio Miccoli pulled Perugia back into the game with a goal in the 64th minute but any hopes they had of snatching a point were destroyed by the Divine Ponytail's late strike.

UDINESE 1 TORINO 1

Torino grabbed an away point at Udinese, the first on their travels in Serie A this season. Cristiano Lucarelli fired home their equaliser in the 58th minute to deny the home side, who had gone in front just three minutes earlier.

Udinese stole in front when Iaquineta powered home a header from David Pizarro's free-kick, but they soon relinquished their advantage.

Defender Paolo Castellini was allowed to run down the left flank and his low cross into the centre was

gratefully helped into the net by Lucarelli, who steered the ball coolly past De Sanctis.

EMPOLI 1 MODENA 0

Empoli snatched a 1-0 win over Modena thanks to a late strike from Tommaso Rocchi in a Serie A mid-table clash.

Rocchi struck six minutes from time to seal all three points in a game they had to begin without injured playmaker Antonio Di Natale.

When Empoli's goal finally came it took a disastrous error from Modena goalkeeper Marco Ballotta.

The veteran stopper miscontrolled a back pass and Rocchi needed no second invitation to slide in and score.

ROMA 3 REGGINA 0

The good news first - Roma got the sort of win which their coach Fabio Capello needed, a three-goal victory against a poor Reggina side.

But the bad news - and in this torrid season for the 2001 champions there had to be some - their captain Francesco Totti had to be substituted with a knee injury in the first half, after scoring Roma's second goal.

Roma came into the game as the 11th-placed team in Serie A after 13 rounds of matches, while their Champions League form of late has been woeful.

So when Walter Samuel scored their opener in the third minute there was immense relief with another from Totti in the 23rd minute further delighting the Giallorossi faithful.

Totti went off in the 37th minute and Vincenzo Montella added the third goal after 70 minutes.

FIXTURES

Saturday 21 December

Modena v Udinese

Torino v Roma

Sunday 22 December

AC Milan v Brescia

Atalanta v Empoli

Chievo v Como

Lazio v Bologna

Perugia v Juventus

Reggina v Piacenza

Parma v Inter Milan

Piacenza 0 - 3 Chievo, Bologna 2 - 1 Parma, AS Roma 3 - 0 Reggina, Brescia 3 - 1 Perugia, Como 1 - 2 AC Milan, Empoli 1 - 0 Modena, Inter Milan 1 - 0 Atalanta, Udinese 1 - 1 Torino, Juventus 1 - 2 Lazio.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AC Milan	14	10	2	2	30	10	32
Lazio	14	9	4	1	30	14	31
Inter Milan	14	9	3	2	29	15	30
Chievo	14	8	2	4	24	13	26
Juventus	14	7	5	2	22	12	26
Bologna	14	7	5	2	18	10	26
Parma	14	6	4	4	25	16	22
Roma	14	5	5	4	26	22	20
Empoli	14	6	2	6	21	19	20
Udinese	13	5	4	4	12	14	19
Modena	14	6	1	7	12	21	19
Perugia	14	5	3	6	18	22	18
Brescia	14	4	3	7	19	26	15
Piacenza	14	3	3	8	11	20	12
Atalanta	13	2	2	9	11	24	8
Reggina	14	1	4	9	10	26	7
Torino	13	2	1	10	7	27	7
Como	13	0	5	8	8	22	5



ENGLISH



An English Odyssey

By Stuart Jones

Welcome back to coverage of the world game in the old dart. Interesting column in the Observer recently giving a critical analysis of Arsenal's midfield and predicting Manchester United would win the title the week before they defeated Arsenal, a result the aforementioned columnist picked.

Sop what is so strange about that? Well the columnist was none other than Tony Adams. Adams claims Arsenal have the talent to win the Champions League, but Manchester United will win the endurance race which is the league.

When I first started having a shot at Tottenham each column I really thought I would run out of material in a month but half way through the season Spurs even amaze me as to how much material they produce each week. This week Spurs boss David Levy is threatening to move the club away from White Hart Lane (and no Gunners fans apparently it really does start with a W not a SH) unless the area is regenerated with improved transport links. It must be put the council in a difficult position for if Spurs moved out the whole of north London could come out and reveal what has been held secret north of the Thames for decades - they all support Arsenal (and Leyton Orient). Not sure how serious the council would take the threat because I can't see too many towns in England putting up their hands for Tottenham to come too. Even Milton Keynes now has Wimbledon, so the last of the boring towns are taken!

In late news David Levy has announced he would ground share with Arsenal if he had to! And why not - they could change their colour to red, rename themselves and become the Arsenal third string team!

Bad news in the UEFA cup with both Fulham (0-0) and Leeds (losing 1-2 at home) exiting the competition. Liverpool managed another 1-0 win to make it through though. In the next round they have drawn Auxerre with the possibility of a clash with Celtic in the quarter finals. In the champions league Newcastle look all but out whilst Manchester United look all but through. Arsenal still have some tough games ahead of them to qualify.

Bondi Beach claimed a couple more Poms this week - in an unexpected manner. Sheffield Wednesday pair Ian Hendon and Phil Scott have been suspended by the club after being arrested on suspicion of assault. The assault was alleged to have occurred outside the Bondi Beach bar which is a Leeds nightclub.

Derby County have sold Jamaican striker Deon Burton to Portsmouth. Burton had handed in a transfer request himself and despite his recent good form it was thought better to release the player in light of the club's financial woes. Pompey are also in the market for on loan former England player Steve Stone but have said it is up to his current employers, Aston Villa, to make the next move in the deal.

Interesting to see Chelsea moving up and up the table. Over the last ten years we have all seen the huge amounts of money spent at the Bridge for little reward (except some cup titles). This off season the club were held to a new financial strain. Yet due to that the club has had a settled off season and the result are telling on the park, the Blues playing as a team and winning. Ken Bates decision to stick with Claudia Ranieri is also paying off. It also helps that Zola is having an Indian summer in terms of form. Ranieri also has been helped by a lack of the perennial evil in any side - injuries.

On that note it could well be a good thing for Chelsea to win, just to get a new face in the winners circle. Since 1980 the best team in England has been; Liverpool 7 Manchester United 7 Arsenal 4 Everton 2 Leeds 1 Aston Villa 1 Blackburn 1. Seven teams in 23 championships.

David Seaman could be having nightmares at West Broms latest player move. His nemesis, one of a few by now, Macedonian captain Arim Sakiri, looks set to join the Baggies from CSKA when the transfer window opens in January. It was Sakiri who beat Seaman direct form a corner in England's recent match against the Macedonians. In related news Seaman has vowed not to quit international football despite the flak he has received recently over a number of poor pieces of play for England. It was also reported this week that the England management has said it would love to have Alan Shearer on board. However Sven Goran Eriksson has acknowledged it is very unlikely he will ever get the opportunity to select Shearer.

Nicky Southall has quit Bolton and returned to Gillingham. Just 18 months after moving north has failed to play a match for Bolton this season and left on a free transfer.

Howard Wilkinson has threatened to make unpopular decisions to keep Sunderland up this season and substituted Michael Phillips to prove it. Wilkinson said in any club you can not afford to have egos around so he will make the decisions that best give the club a chance of staying up, however unpopular.

Charlton Athletic have announced a 10.7 million pound loss although a couple of one off valuations has led to this big total. They did increase turnover and there has been an increase in cash revenue. Also it was announced that there was no threat to player payments. The accounts were seen by many as financially prudent with a lot of the loss being put down to forward thinking plans and the instability of the transfer market.

Tottenham and Arsenal shared the points in the north London derby, with Spurs unable to ram home their dominance in a 1-1 draw.

The point takes Arsenal a point clear of Manchester United at the top of the Premiership, while Spurs climb up to seventh. The hosts battered the champions in the first half but couldn't add to Christian Ziege's cracking 30-yard free kick after 11 minutes.

Ashley Cole twice had to clear off the line to prevent Arsenal falling further behind before the Gunners were handed a lifeline. Just before the break, Thierry Henry latched on to Freddie Ljungberg's pass.

The Frenchman was going away from goal, but Spurs keeper Kasey Keller rushed out and needlessly brought him down. Robert Pires slotted home the penalty and the sides went in all-square. Arsenal had to improve in the second half and they did. But despite looking as if they would take control, it was Spurs who created the best chances.

Twice Robbie Keane was in the clear against David Seaman, but the England keeper got the better of him on both occasions, making up for a nervy start to the match. At the other end, Henry's mazy run almost produced another goal of the season contender but an away win would have been very harsh on Glenn Hoddle's men. Liverpool's title hopes took another severe dent as they crashed 2-1 at struggling Sunderland.

It was a fourth Premiership defeat in a row for the Reds, who are now five points behind the Gunners and have the Merseyside derby next on the agenda next Sunday after a Worthington Cup quarter-final with Aston Villa in mid-week.

An exquisite finish by former Everton midfielder Gavin McCann gave the Weariders the lead in the first half when he deftly chipped keeper Chris Kirkland from a narrow angle after Steven Gerrard had lost possession just outside his own area. But Liverpool piled on the pressure in the second half and it was no surprise when Milan baros pulled the visitors level after 68 minutes with a quick turn and shot from Gerrard's pass.

But against the run of play, Sudnerland grabbed an unlikely winner five minutes from time when substitute Michael Proctor confused the Reds defence with an air shot but then took advantage of a second bit by drilling a low shot into the corner to lift his side out of the bottom three.

Meanwhile, Birmingham triumphed 1-0 away at Fulham thanks to Jovan Kirovski's early goal.

The American, making his full League debut for the Blues, curled home an angled 20-yard shot in the sixth minute and it proved decisive. The visitors had to survive with ten men late on after defender Darren Purse was sent off after a reckless lunge on Calum Willock earned him a second yellow card.

On Saturday Manchester United's title charge continued to gather pace after a 3-0 demolition of hapless bottom side West Ham on Saturday afternoon. The game was effectively over inside the opening 17 minutes as Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and Juan Sebastian Veron both found the net.

The Hammers' misery was complete when Sebastian Schemmel scored at the wrong end in the second half. The win was United's seventh in succession and their fourth consecutive clean sheet.

FIXTURES

Saturday 21 December

Arsenal v Middlesbrough

Birmingham v Charlton

Chelsea v Aston Villa

Leeds v Southampton

Newcastle v Fulham

West Brom v Sunderland

West Ham v Bolton

Sunday 22 December

Blackburn v Man Utd

Liverpool v Everton

Monday 23 December

Man City v Tottenham



Robert Pires's equaliser ensured Arsenal a point.

Chelsea missed the chance to go clear at the top of the table after being held to a 1-1 draw by Middlesbrough at the Riverside Stadium.

The game spectacularly burst into life when Geremi opened the scoring for Middlesbrough with a superb curling free-kick after 33 minutes. Chelsea had previously failed to test Mark Schwarzer but were jolted into their attacking stride with Gianfranco Zola immediately going close at the other end.

Schwarzer also saved well from Frank Lampard but the equaliser finally came from a Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink corner three minutes before the break. Boro failed to clear Hasselbaink's cross and John Terry drove home to make it 1-1.

Marc-Vivien Foe struck twice as Manchester City staged a superb fight-back to deny in-form Charlton a fifth successive win.

Both sides created little in a scrappy first half but Charlton took a firm grip on the game with two goals after the break. The Addicks profited from their first attack in the second half when Kevin Horlock felled Kevin Lisbie in the area. Jason Euell stepped up to convert from the spot before Claus Jensen added the second from a Lisbie pass after 63 minutes.

But Foe pulled one back for City when he turned in an Ali Benarbia cross after 73 minutes and the claimed a dramatic leveller to make it 2-2 three minutes from time. Everton got back to winning ways after coming back from behind to beat Blackburn 2-1 in an entertaining contest at Goodison Park.

David Moyes' side had fallen behind after just after just six minutes at Goodison Park when Richard Wright failed to deal with David Thompson's dangerous free-kick and Andy Cole struck. But the home side were soon back on level terms as Wayne Rooney cracked a shot against the post and Lee Carsley rolled home the equaliser.

Rooney then got on the scoresheet himself as he raced onto a long ball from Wright and fired home to put the home side ahead after 25 minutes.

Rovers, who scored a late equaliser against Bolton last week, pressed to get back into the game but the closest they came was when Cole hit the post in the first half. The visitors were left with an uphill task when Lucas Neill was sent off after a second yellow card on 74 minutes.

Southampton and Newcastle settled for a point apiece after an eventful 1-1 draw at the St Mary's Stadium.

Both sides had numerous chances in an end-to-end contest but the opening goal did not come until the 50th minute. Craig Bellamy was the man who did the damage when he curled an unstoppable shot beyond the otherwise outstanding Paul Jones. But Newcastle's joy was short-lived as Saints attacked and Chris Marsden tapped home two minutes later. Tomas Hitzlsperger fired a superb injury-time winner as 10-man Aston Villa beat West Brom 2-1 in a gritty West Midlands derby. England World Cup striker Darius Vassell opened the scoring for Villa after 16 minutes following a Hitzlsperger free-kick.

The German Under-21 international fired his shot straight into the wall but Vassell was the first to react and finished clinically. The Baggies drew level when Jason Koumas curled in a fine equaliser after 29 minutes and they looked good for a point when Steve Staunton was sent off for a second bookable offence.

But Villa had no intention of hanging on for a draw and claimed all three points with Hitzlsperger's stunning late effort.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Manchester U. 3 - 0 West Ham U., Aston Villa 2 - 1 West Bromwich A., Charlton Athletic 2 - 2 Manchester C., Everton 2 - 1 Blackburn R., Middlesbrough 1 - 1 Chelsea, Southampton 1 - 1 Newcastle U., Fulham 0 - 1 Birmingham C., Tottenham H. 1 - 1 Arsenal, Sunderland 2 - 1 Liverpool.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	18	11	3	4	37	20	36
Man Utd	18	10	5	3	30	17	35
Chelsea	18	9	7	2	32	15	34
Everton	18	10	2	6	22	21	32
Liverpool	18	9	4	5	28	19	31
Newcastle	17	9	2	6	27	24	29
Tottenham	18	8	4	6	24	24	28
Southampton	18	7	6	5	21	18	27
Middlesbrough	18	7	5	6	22	16	26
Blackburn	18	6	6	6	24	22	24
Charlton	18	7	3	8	20	22	24
Man City	18	7	3	8	22	25	24
Birmingham	18	6	5	7	17	21	23
Fulham	18	6	4	8	22	23	22
Aston Villa	18	6	4	8	17	18	22
Leeds	17	5	2	10	20	25	17
Sunderland	18	4	5	9	10	24	17
West Brom	18	4	3	11	13	27	15
Bolton	16	3	5	8	18	28	14
West Ham	18	3	4	11	17	34	13

FIRST DIVISION

Bradford C. 1 - 0 Nottingham F., Burnley 2 - 6 Rotherham U., Crystal Palace 2 - 0 Norwich C., Derby County 1 - 0 Brighton & Hove A., Ipswich T. 4 - 2 Watford, Leicester C. 4 - 1 Millwall, Preston North End 3 - 0 Grimsby T., Reading 0 - 2 Sheffield U., Sheffield W. 0 - 2 Gillingham, Stoke C. 1 - 1 Portsmouth, Walsall 2 - 0 Wimbledon, Wolverhampton W. 0 - 2 Coventry C.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portsmouth	23	16	5	2	48	21	53
Leicester	23	14	6	3	37	21	48
Nottm Forest	23	11	6	6	38	22	39
Norwich	23	11	6	6	34	20	39
Sheff Utd	22	11	6	5	35	24	39
Reading	22	12	3	7	24	16	39
Wolverhampton	22	10	6	6	39	23	36
Rotherham	23	9	7	7	40	28	34
Watford	23	10	4	9	29	36	34
Crystal Palace	23	8	9	6	34	26	33
Derby	23	10	3	10	28	28	33
Coventry	23	9	6	8	29	30	33
Burnley	23	9	5	9	33	41	32
Preston	23	7	10	6	40	38	31
Wimbledon	23	9	4	10	38	38	31
Gillingham	23	8	7	8	26	29	31
Millwall	23	8	5	10	24	35	29
Walsall	23	8	4	11	36	38	28
Ipswich	22	7	6	9	30	28	27
Bradford	23	5	7	11	23	41	22
Grimsby	23	4	5	14	24	47	17
Stoke	23	3	7	13	23	41	16
Brighton	23	3	5	15	22	42	14
Sheff Wed	23	2	8	13	17	38	14

SECOND DIVISION

Brentford 2 - 1 Chesterfield, Crewe Alexandra 2 - 0 Barnsley, Huddersfield T. 2 - 1 Stockport County, Luton T. 1 - 2 Colchester U., Mansfield T. 4 - 0 Blackpool, Northampton T. 0 - 4 Tranmere R., Notts County 3 - 0 Queens Park R., Oldham Athletic 0 - 2 Wigan Athletic, Peterborough U. 4 - 1 Cheltenham, Plymouth Argyle 1 - 1 Swindon T., Wycombe W. 3 - 1 Port Vale, Cardiff C. 0 - 2 Bristol C.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wigan	21	14	5	2	36	13	47
Bristol City	21	14	2	5	45	25	44
Cardiff	21	13	4	4	35	17	43
Oldham	21	11	6	4	34	16	39
Crewe	21	11	5	5	32	17	38
Brentford	21	9	5	7	27	24	32
QPR	21	8	6	7	28	25	30
Luton	21	8	6	7	31	29	30
Chesterfield	21	9	3	9	18	23	30
Tranmere	21	9	3	9	26	33	30
Blackpool	21	8	4	9	25	32	28
Plymouth	21	6	8	7	28	29	26
Wycombe	21	7	5	9	29	31	26
Port Vale	21	7	5	9	26	33	26
Colchester	21	6	7	8	21	27	25
Northampton	21	7	4	10	21	29	25
Stockport	21	7	3	11	26	31	24
Swindon	21	6	6	9	25	31	24
Barnsley	21	6	6	9	24	33	24
Notts County	21	4	10	7	30	31	22
Peterborough	21	5	6	10	26	30	21
Huddersfield	21	5	6	10	17	25	21
Cheltenham	21	5	6	10	20	29	21
Mansfield	21	5	3	13	36	53	18

German Bundesliga

Visitors Stuttgart stole the points on Sunday with goals from Thomas Schneider and Fernando Meira, but they had to withstand a late rally from Wolfsburg to win 2-1.

Tomislav Maric reduced the deficit from the penalty spot after Stefan Effenberg had been fouled, but it was not enough.

Defeat marked a disappointing start for Wolfsburg in their new stadium and they remain in the lower half of the Bundesliga table.

In the day's other game, Harry Koch's late penalty gave Kaiserslautern their second home win in succession and went some way to suggesting all is not yet lost this season for Eric Gerets and his players.

Vratislav Lokvenc put them ahead in the 28th minute, but mid-table Hertha Berlin drew level on the hour when Pal Dardai netted.



Borussia Dortmund's Jan Koller beats Zsolt Loew of Energie Cottbus to a header.

But Koch's spot-kick in the 87th minute secured maximum points for the Red Devils to take them into the new year on a positive note after so many lows in 2002. On Saturday, defending champions Borussia Dortmund ended their year in style by hammering basement club Energie Cottbus 4-0 to close the gap

on leaders Bayern Munich to six points.

Czech striker Jan Koller put Dortmund ahead after eight minutes and Ewerthon extended that advantage in the 47th minute.

Substitute Marcio Amoroso added the third seven minutes from time and Koller notched the fourth in the last minute. Leaders Bayern were held to a goalless draw by a determined Schalke.

Frank Neubarth's men were determined to bounce back after Tuesday night's 4-1 defeat by Wisla Krakow saw them crash out of the UEFA Cup in the third round and the point keeps them in fourth place.

Werder Bremen kept the pressure on the top two after a 2-0 home win over struggling Borussia Monchengladbach.

Markus Daun opened the scoring for Bremen in the 13th minute before Brazilian Goncalves Ailton doubled the lead in the 58th minute.

Bayer Leverkusen's poor season continued with a 2-0 home defeat to Nurnberg, which means coach Klaus Toppmoller has a lot of work to do during the winter break.

Leverkusen, who have lost both of their games in the second group phase of the Champions League, currently lie fifth from bottom in Germany.

Sasa Ciric gave Nurnberg the lead in the 59th minute and Carlos Junior added the second two minutes from the end.

Thomas Christianson's 77th-minute strike gave VfL Bochum a 1-1 draw at 1860 Munich.

His goal maintains Bochum's rate of scoring more than a third of their goals in the final 15 minutes, and it cancelled out Benjamin Lauth's 15th-minute opener.

Seventh-placed Hamburg suffered a disappointing goalless draw at home to lowly Hansa Rostock.

The draw leaves them eight points adrift of second-placed Dortmund.

Finally, Hannover's poor luck in front of goal continued as they were held to a 0-0 draw at home to Arminia Bielefeld.

Hannover have now gone five games without finding the net, although this result does end a run of four successive defeats

Bayer Leverkusen 0 - 2 Nurnberg, Bayern Munich 0 - 0 Schalke, Bochum 1 - 1 Munich 1860, Energie Cottbus 0 - 4 Borussia Dortmund, Hannover 0 - 0 Arminia Bielefeld, Hansa Rostock 0 - 0 Hamburger SV, Werder Bremen 2 - 0 Monchengladbach, Kaiserslautern 2 - 1 Hertha BSC, Wolfsburg 1 - 2 Stuttgart.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern Munich	17	12	3	2	36	14	39
Borussia Dortmund	17	9	6	2	28	13	33
Werder Bremen	17	10	3	4	34	27	33
Schalke	17	7	7	3	21	14	28
VfB Stuttgart	17	7	6	4	27	22	27
1860 Munich	17	7	4	6	25	24	25
Hamburg	17	7	4	6	21	23	25
VfL Bochum	17	6	5	6	31	28	23
Hertha Berlin	17	6	5	6	19	19	23
Wolfsburg	17	7	2	8	20	22	23
Arminia Bielefeld	17	6	4	7	21	24	22
Nurnberg	17	6	3	8	23	27	21
Hansa Rostock	17	5	5	7	20	20	20
Bayer Leverkusen	17	5	5	7	24	27	20
Borussia M'gladbach	17	5	4	8	20	19	19
Hannover 96	17	4	4	9	22	33	16
FC Kaiserslautern	17	3	4	10	17	28	13
Cottbus	17	2	4	11	13	38	10

Spanish Primera Liga

Gutsy Real Sociedad stretched their lead to four points at the top of the Primera Liga on Sunday and emphasised just why they could be Spanish champions this season as they recovered to beat Real Mallorca 2-1.

After a goalless first half, they fell behind two minutes into the second period when Samuel Eto'o struck for Mallorca. But this Sociedad side take some beating and they were level four minutes later through Francisco de Pedro and in front when Mikel Aranburu scored in the 57th minute. As the queue to knock them down grows, so Sociedad's resolve becomes all the more impressive, and they are unbeaten now in 14 matches since the start of the season. Real Madrid avoided a major humiliation as they battled back from 2-0 down to beat Recreativo Huelva 4-2 in the Bernabeu. Recreativo went in front and the home crowd were shellshocked and disbelieving.

But perhaps those goals were exactly what Real needed to alert them to their failings at home, because they were irresistible once they got going and goals from Raul Bravo, Ivan Helguera, Raul and Luis Figo ended their run of five home matches without a win.

The noose around Louis van Gaal's neck has tightened even further following Barcelona's 3-0 loss to third-from-bottom Sevilla at the Nou Camp.

Despite their perfect record in the Champions League, the Catalans have slipped down to 13th place in La Liga - an amazing 16 points off the pace. Sevilla went ahead after just five minutes when Casquero converted from the penalty spot. Barca remained some hope of getting back in to the match until the 77th minute when Mariano Toedti got the first of his two goals. He added his second and Sevilla's third of the night ten minutes later.

An acrobatic goal from Albert Luque five minutes from time was enough to give Deportivo La Coruna a deserved 1-0 victory over Malaga. Victor set up the chance when his pass found Luque with his back to goal and seemingly with little chance of creating a goalscoring opportunity.

But Luque cleverly flicked the ball up and bicycle-kicked it over two defenders and in off the underside of the bar.



Real Sociedad's Nihat Kahveci beats Marcos of Mallorca to the ball.

High-flying Celta Vigo were given a jolt by Racing Santander as the struggling home side clinched a comfortable 3-0 victory.

Two goals in two minutes in the second half put Santander in control, with Jose Moraton Mora opening the scoring on the hour and Yossi Benayoun adding a second just a minute later to stun Vigo. And it was Benayoun who proved the Santander hero as he netted his second of the game after 71 minutes to wrap up a comprehensive victory.

Victor Onopko scored the only goal of the game as Rayo Vallecano beat Real Betis to continue the club's recent revival. Onopko struck in the 16th minute to make it two superb wins in a row over higher-ranked sides after last week's win over Barcelona by the same score. David Aganzo scored twice in 10 minutes as Real Valladolid ended a run of four games without a goal and beat Athletic Bilbao 2-0. Aganzo struck his first just after the hour and then doubled his team's lead in the 71st minute to secure a win which goes a long way to relieving their relegation fears.

Espanyol's relegation worries deepened as they were pipped 1-0 at Osasuna and had a player sent off in the final minute.

Martin Posse was dismissed after being shown his second yellow card of the game just minutes after being booked for the first time.

Antonio Lopez grabbed the only goal of the game early in the second half with a superbly struck free-kick from 20 yards.

John Carew struck twice on Saturday night as Valencia beat Villarreal 2-0 to step up the pressure at the Primera Liga summit.

Carew put them in front after 52 minutes and Villarreal's cause was hampered by the dismissal of Quique Alvarez three minutes later, receiving his second booking as he checked the run of Pablo Aimar when the Argentinian was racing into the penalty area.

With their one-man advantage, Valencia looked increasingly in control, and they doubled their lead in the 63rd minute when Carew fired in from a tight angle to the right of goal. In Saturday's other game Alves upset the form book to beat Atletico Madrid 2-0 and give some needed impetus to a disappointing season.

Atletico, in seventh, came into the game as one of the form teams in the Primera Liga, but Ruben Navarro and Adrian Ilie both scored in the first half for the Basque outfit to secure victory.

Deportivo Alaves 2 - 0 Atletico Madrid, Villarreal 0 - 2 Valencia, Deportivo La Coruna 1 - 0 Malaga, Osasuna 1 - 0 Espanyol, Racing Santander 3 - 0 Celta de Vigo, Real Betis 0 - 1 Rayo Vallecano, Real Sociedad 2 - 1 Mallorca, Valladolid 2 - 0 Athletic Bilbao, Real Madrid 4 - 2 Recreativo Huelva, Barcelona 0 - 3 Sevilla.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Sociedad	14	9	5	0	26	15	32
Valencia	14	8	4	2	24	7	28
Real Madrid	13	6	6	1	26	13	24
Celta Vigo	14	7	3	4	17	12	24
D Coruna	14	6	5	3	19	17	23
Mallorca	14	7	2	5	21	22	23
Real Betis	14	6	5	3	24	15	23
Atletico Madrid	14	5	6	3	19	15	21
Malaga	14	4	6	4	18	19	18
Osasuna	14	5	3	6	16	19	18
Valladolid	14	5	2	7	13	17	17
Racing Santander	14	5	2	7	15	15	17
Barcelona	14	4	4	6	18	19	16
CD Alaves	14	4	4	6	17	23	16
Villarreal	14	3	6	5	13	15	15
Athletic Bilbao	14	4	3	7	19	28	15
Rayo Vallecano	14	4	3	7	16	22	15
Sevilla	13	3	5	5	11	11	14
Espanyol	14	3	1	10	14	26	10
Recreativo Huelva	14	2	3	9	12	28	9

FIXTURES

Thursday 2 January 2003

Real Madrid v Sevilla

Sunday 5 January 2003

Barcelona v Recreativo Huelva

CD Alaves v Espanyol

D Coruna v Celta Vigo

Osasuna v Rayo Vallecano

Racing Santander v Athletic Bilbao

Real Madrid v Valencia

Real Sociedad v Malaga

Sevilla v Mallorca

Valladolid v Real Betis

Villarreal v Atletico Madrid



WORLD



DUTCH EREDIVISIE



Jan Vennegoor of Hesselink netted twice as PSV Eindhoven smashed Ajax's unbeaten league record in the clash of the titans at the Amsterdam Arena.

The 4-2 win also sees PSV replace their arch-rivals at the top of the Eredivisie table. PSV, who started the game a point behind Ajax in second, took the lead after just 14 minutes through Arjen Robben.

But Zlatan Ibrahimovic hit back 13 minutes later with Ajax's 4,000th goal in the Dutch top-flight to send the teams into the break level at one apiece.

Parity lasted just three minutes into the second half though before prolific marksman Mateja Kezman netted his 18th goal of the season to put PSV back in front. The home side stormed back to equalise a second time through Andy Van der Meyde's 55th-minute strike but that only inspired PSV to redouble their efforts and they secured victory through Vennegoor of Hesselink's double.

He netted his opener just two minutes after Van der Meyde had levelled the scores before wrapping up the points with PSV's fourth 11 minutes from time. Feyenoord thumped poor AZ Alkmaar 6-1 as they kept up the pressure on PSV and Ajax to lie only seven points off the top of the table.

Shinji Ono and Pierre van Hooijdonk struck two goals apiece for the home side with Sebastian Pardo and Mariano Bombarda chipping in with the others.

Small consolation for the hapless visitors was a second-half goal from Kenneth Perez.

In the day's other game, Utrecht's hopes of catching the Eredivisie pacesetters suffered a setback as they were held to a 2-2 draw away at Heerenveen.

John de Jong scored just before half-time to give the home side the lead going into the break, before Dirk Kuijt struck twice, once from the spot, to put Utrecht in front.

But Kuijt had barely found the back of the net for a second time when Romano Denneboom struck the point-saving equaliser for Heerenveen.

On Saturday, Willem II goalkeeper Geert De Vileger was injured by missiles thrown from the crowd as his side fought out a stormy 1-1 draw with bottom club De Graafschap.

De Vileger was hurt towards the end of a controversial encounter, which also

saw two Willem players sent off, when objects, including fireworks and bottles, were thrown onto the pitch.

The incident caused play to be held up for 10 minutes as the players were led off the field in an appeal for calm.

Tempers began to boil over in the second half and reached a crescendo shortly after De Graafschap's Dave Zafarin had cancelled out Cedric van der Gun's first-minute goal after 75 minutes.

Problems began when Rene Bot escaped punishment for a controversial challenge on Dmitri Shoukov.

Shoukov then decided to take the law into his own hands and sought retribution with a fierce tackle of his own on Bot.

A mass brawl broke out between players of both sides and after calm was restored, Shoukov was given his marching orders for violent conduct.

Coach Mark Wotte was furious and later found himself sent from the dugout after venting his anger at the referee. De Vileger then became involved when the crowd turned on him for time-wasting shortly after the De Graafschap equaliser.

Words were exchanged between the crowd and the keeper, who also gestured angrily back. After he was struck on the head by an object, the referee felt he had no option but to halt play.

That was not the end of the problems, soon after the resumption James Quinn also saw red for pushing Edwin Hermans after the ball had gone out of play. NAC Breda leapfrogged RKC Waalwijk and went fourth in the Eredivisie thanks to a hard-fought 1-0 home victory.

Orlando Engelaar notched the only goal of the game in the 26th minute when he drilled an Alfred Schreuder cross powerfully beyond RKC goalkeeper Khalid Sinouh. Steve Olfers bagged a last-gasp equaliser to clinch a 2-2 draw as Excelsior punished Twente's Ellery Cairo for being sent off late on at Sportpark Woudestein.

In the night's other game struggling Zwolle earned a crucial point from a dour goalless draw with NEC Nijmegen in a game which had been in doubt due to sub-zero conditions.

FC Groningen 3 - 2 Roda Kerkrade, De Graafschap 1 - 1 Willem II Tilburg, Excelsior Rotterdam 2 - 2 FC Twente Enschede, FC Zwolle 0 - 0 NEC Nijmegen, NAC Breda 1 - 0 RKC Waalwijk, Ajax Amsterdam 2 - 4 PSV Eindhoven, Feyenoord Rotterdam 6 - 1 AZ Alkmaar, SC Heerenveen 2 - 2 FC Utrecht.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PSV	16	12	3	1	41	10	39
Ajax	16	11	4	1	42	18	37
Feyenoord	16	10	2	4	39	19	32
NAC	15	6	7	2	21	11	25
FC Utrecht	16	6	6	4	23	20	24
RKC	16	7	3	6	18	23	24
Roda JC	16	6	5	5	29	25	23
Willem II	16	6	4	6	25	23	22
AZ	16	6	2	8	27	40	20
FC Twente	16	4	7	5	18	24	19
NEC	15	5	4	6	19	26	19
Heerenveen	16	4	5	7	22	29	17
Vitesse	15	4	4	7	16	17	16
RBC	15	4	4	7	20	23	16
Excelsior	15	3	6	6	18	26	15
FC Groningen	16	3	4	9	16	27	13
FC Zwolle	15	3	4	8	14	25	13
De Graafschap	16	2	4	10	15	37	10



UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE REVIEW



UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

10 December 2002

Internazionale v Leverkusen 3-2, Ajax v Roma 2-1, Arsenal v Valencia 0-0

4. Newcastle United 2 0 0 2 2 7 -5 0

11 DECEMBER 2002

Barcelona v Newcastle 3-1

Dortmund v Milan 0-1

Madrid v Lokomotiv 2-2

Juventus v Basel 4-0

Man. United v Deportivo 2-0

1. Arsenal

2. Ajax

3. Valencia

4. Roma

Group B

P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1. Arsenal	2	1	1	0	3	1	2 4
2. Ajax	2	1	1	0	3	2	1 4
3. Valencia	2	0	2	0	1	1	0 2
4. Roma	2	0	0	2	2	5	-3 0

Group C

P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1. AC Milan	2	2	0	0	2	0	2 6
2. Borussia Dortmund	2	1	0	1	2	2	0 3
3. Lokomotiv Moscow	2	0	1	1	3	4	-1 1
4. Real Madrid	2	0	1	1	2	3	-1 1

Group A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1. Inter Milan	2	2	0	0	7	3	4	6
2. Barcelona	2	2	0	0	5	2	3	6
3. Bayer Leverkusen	2	0	0	2	3	5	-2	0

Group D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1. Man Utd	2	2	0	0	5	1	4	6
2. Juventus	2	1	1	0	6	2	4	4
3. D Coruna	2	0	1	1	2	4	-2	1
4. Basle	2	0	0	2	1	7	-6	0

NEXT FIXTURES.

FEBRUARY 18, 2003

Barcelona v Internazionale

Leverkusen v Newcastle

Arsenal v Ajax

Roma v Valencia

FEBRUARY 19, 2003

Madrid v Dortmund

Milan v Lokomotiv

Basel v Deportivo

Man. United v Juventus



AC Milan and Borussia Dortmund in action.



GREEK ETHNIKI KATIGORIA



Just before this season's midpoint Greek champion Olympiakos managed to add another three points to their tally and boost their chances for their quest of a 7th consecutive Greek league championship. The Reds beat Panionios easily at Athens' Rizoupoli stadium 3-0 and are the only A' Division team that has not been defeated thus far this season.

The first half 2-0 score line certainly favors Panionios if someone takes in consideration the performance by each team. Olympiakos came into the game to earn an early lead in order to secure another comfortable win

against a Panionios team that was simply there to defend their goal-line. In the 13th Giovanni headed the ball home after a Giannakopoulos cross, while in the 23rd it was Giovanni that passed the ball to Giannakopoulos who in turn found the back of the net to make the score 2-0.

The Greek champions missed three more golden scoring opportunities during the first half as shots from Giovanni, Venetidis, and Giannakopoulos sailed over Panionios' crossbar.

During the second half, both teams decided to... take it easy. Olympiakos players were comfortable with their 2-0 lead,

while the Panionios players never believed they could overcome the task ahead. The result was for the game to slow down and been able to count only a couple good scoring opportunities and a goal from Olympiakos. In the 82nd took advantage of a superb-run by Stelios Giannakopoulos to find the back of the net and to make the final score of 3-0. In other Greek matches SKODA Xanthi stunned Panathinaikos at home with a nil-all draw leaving Markarian's team in fourth position.

Prodeftiki did their bit to gain the three valuable points defeating Ionikos away, PAS

Giannina claimed a valuable point against Kallithea with a two-all score-line.

While in the rounds final matches, Ofi drew two-all with Aigaleo while Aris defeated bitter rivals PAOK at home two-nil to put them in third position.



Aris players celebrate their 2-0 win against rivals PAOK Salonika.

OFI Crete 2 - 2 Egaleo Athens, Kallithea 2 - 2 Giannina, Panahaiki Patras 2 - 0 Akrotis, Ionikos Nikea 0 - 1 Prodeftiki, Olympiakos Piraeus 3 - 0 Panionios, Xanthi Skoda 0 - 0 Panathinaikos, Aris Saloniki 2 - 0 PAOK Saloniki.

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
1 Olympiakos	11	6	5	0	26	4	23
2 Aris	11	6	3	2	14	9	21
3 PAOK	11	6	3	2	26	16	21
4 Panathinaikos	11	6	2	3	12	8	20
5 Iraklis	10	5	3	2	13	8	18
6 Prodeftiki	11	4	5	2	12	9	17
7 Xanthi	11	3	7	1	14	6	16
8 AEK	10	4	3	3	14	12	15
9 Panionios	11	4	3	4	10	10	15
10 Egaleo	11	2	7	2	9	11	13
11 OFI	11	2	5	4	11	13	11
12 Kallithea	11	2	5	4	10	13	11
13 Ionikos	11	2	4	5	6	17	10
14 Akrotis	11	2	2	7	9	22	8
15 Giannina	11	1	4	6	10	16	7
16 Panahaiki	11	1	1	9	4	26	4

Scottish Premier League

Kilmarnock further dented Celtic's title aspirations as Joos Valgaeren rescued a point for the champions at Rugby Park. The Belgian defender struck in the second half after Andy McLaren's first-half header had given Kilmarnock hope of an upset, but Martin O'Neill's men had ample opportunities to take all the points.

But all were wasted and bitter rivals now have four-point gap at the top. But Jim Jefferies' side - who had won their last two games - stunned the champions by snatching the breakthrough with their first real chance of the game after 19 minutes. Shaun Dillon swung in a dangerous free-kick and McLaren's glancing header from nine yards flew past the despairing dive of Robert Douglas and nestled in the top corner of the net.

Celtic seemed to have a good call for a penalty in the 35th minute after Hartson appeared to be pulled back by Innes from Balde's long ball. Kilmarnock somehow survived just after the break after Celtic hit the post twice in a matter of seconds.

Didier Agathe directed Alan Thompson's cross into the path of Larsson and he drilled a powerful right-foot shot against the woodwork and Sutton did the same with the rebound from three yards out.

But it was only a matter of time before Celtic drew level and they did that in the 66th minute.

Hartson directed Thompson's cross back into the danger area and Valgaeren headed past Marshall from close range.

But despite constant pressure, the Bhoys could not get the three points. Stevie Paterson's reign as new Aberdeen manager got off to a nightmare start as the Pittodrie men were comprehensively beaten 3-0 by Dunfermline. The ex-Inverness Caledonian Thistle boss was given a warm welcome by the travelling fans as he took his place in the dug-out before the game but was given little to cheer about as the dispirited Pittodrie men never looked like giving the home side a run for their money.

Paterson clearly has his work cut out and will worry about the lack of confidence in his side especially after going behind to Stevie Crawford's first-half opener.



Barry Ferguson's hat-trick secured Rangers a 3-0 victory against Dundee United.

An own goal from Jamie McAllister and Craig Brewster's penalty compounded their misery in the second half.

A Barry Ferguson hat-trick gave leaders Rangers a 3-0 victory over Dundee United. The Scottish international midfielder opened the scoring after 13 minutes with a text book free-kick after Derek Lilley had fouled Peter Lovenkrands 20 yards out.

He added a second 10 minutes into the second half with a clinical finish and wrapped up the points with a late penalty after David McCracken had fouled Shota Arevladze in the box. The result extended 'Gers lead over rivals Celtic, who play on Sunday, to five points but it was not a totally happy afternoon. Full-back Fernando Ricksen was sent off for violent conduct as did the Terrors' Jim McIntyre in an explosive finale.

Hearts moved into third place on the slimmest of goal differences thanks to Alan Maybury. The former Leeds United star scored a last-minute volley to see off the gritty challenge of struggling Partick at Tynecastle.

Edinburgh neighbours Hibernian also moved up after a battling 2-1 victory at Livingston. They cruised into a 2-0 lead at Almondvale midway through the second half with goals from Ian Murray and Craig James.

Philippe Brinquin pulled one back for Livvy in the last-minute but it was too little too late. Bottom club Motherwell claimed only their sixth point away from home this season in a 1-1 draw at Dundee.

They went ahead after 25 minutes through striker Dirk Lehmann.

But the lead lasted barely 10 minutes as Argentinian Juan Sara equalised to leave 'Well still propping up the table.

FC Dundee 1 - 1 Motherwell, Hearts 1 - 0 Partick Thistle, Livingston 1 - 2 Hibernian, Rangers 3 - 0 Dundee United, Kilmarnock 1 - 1 Celtic, Dunfermline 3 - 0 Aberdeen.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	20	17	3	0	62	15	54
Celtic	20	16	2	2	55	13	50
Dunfermline	20	10	3	7	37	38	33
Hearts	20	8	6	6	29	32	30
Hibernian	20	9	2	9	28	29	29
Kilmarnock	20	7	5	8	20	32	26
Dundee	20	6	7	7	25	30	25
Partick	20	5	6	9	21	32	21
Aberdeen	20	4	7	9	18	34	19
Livingston	20	4	4	12	27	34	16
Dundee Utd	20	3	6	11	18	38	15
Motherwell	20	3	5	12	25	38	14

French Ligue 1

Olympique Marseille held on to first place in Ligue 1 without playing on Sunday as Olympique Lyonnais conceded a last-minute equaliser against Montpellier SC and pre-weekend leaders Nice suffered a 4-0 loss.

Marseille's third away win this season was achieved on the back of a fine opening goal from Dos Santos in the 39th minute. The defender beat goalkeeper Patrick Regnault from close range following a one-two with Bakayoko. Maker turned scorer in the 49th minute when Bakayoko struck, but Marseille were hanging on at the end after Camara's deflected shot found the net.

Champions Lyon were one of four sides who could have overtaken Marseille, who beat ES Sedan-Ardenne 2-1 on Saturday, and looked like being the only one of that quartet to win as they led bottom-placed Montpellier 1-0 through an Eric Carrière second-half goal. But Abdoulaye Cisse's late intervention for Montpellier ensured Lyon ended the weekend in fourth, two points behind Marseille.

Nice dropped to second as they endured a 4-0 defeat by Bordeaux, who exited the UEFA Cup on Thursday against Anderlecht. Brazilian striker Savio put the home side 2-0 up by half-time, and further goals from Pauleta and Eduardo Costa ensured it was an unhappy return to Bordeaux for Nice coach Gernot Rohr, previously in charge at the Chaban-Delmas stadium.

AS Monaco are up to fourth after themselves gaining a 4-0 win against another side aiming to end the weekend on top of the division, Guingamp. Shabani Nonda opened the scoring with a 39th-minute penalty, and after the break Jerome Rothen added two goals, Monaco's fourth coming from Dado Prso, while Guingamp had Nestor Fabbri sent off late on for deliberate handball.

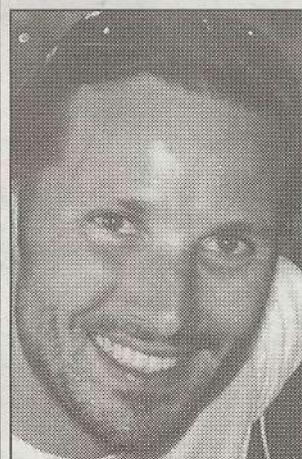
Guingamp hold sixth place, behind Auxerre, who themselves aimed to return to first place but were held 0-0 by Strasbourg, as Paris Saint-Germain lost touch with the leading sides as they fell to a 1-0 defeat at struggling Rennais, courtesy of Dominique Arribagé's 72nd-minute goal, at the end of an unhappy week that has seen PSG exit the French League Cup and the UEFA Cup. Lens, another team whose UEFA Cup campaign ended this week, remain in sight of the top seven after beating Le Havre AC 1-0, while Nantes are also not out of the running thanks to a 2-1 victory against lowly Troyes Aube Champagne, yet to win away all season. Ajaccio gained a valuable point as they seek to avoid relegation as they came from two goals behind to hold Lille 2-2, Bruno Rodriguez's late equaliser ending his side's run of four straight defeats.

In Saturday's other game Pierre-Alain Frau scored a goal and set up another as Sochaux continued their fine home run with a 2-0 win against Bastia. Mickaël Pagis opened the scoring after 16 minutes when volleying in a long cross from Frau. The French Under-21 international, set up by Benoît Pedretti, struck the second goal for his team 13 minutes later despite the intervention of Bastia goalkeeper Nicolas Penneteau.

Sochaux 2 - 0 Bastia, Sedan 1 - 2 Marseille, Ajaccio 2 - 2 Lille, Auxerre 0 - 0 Strasbourg, Bordeaux 4 - 0 Nice, Lens 1 - 0 Le Havre, Lyon 1 - 1 Montpellier, Monaco 4 - 0 Guingamp, Nantes 2 - 1 Troyes, Rennes 1 - 0 Paris S.G.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Marseille	19	10	4	5	20	18	34
Nice	19	9	6	4	24	14	33
Monaco	19	9	5	5	31	19	32
Lyon	19	9	5	5	35	24	32
Auxerre	19	9	5	5	22	18	32
Guingamp	19	9	4	6	28	23	31
Sochaux	19	8	6	5	20	14	30
Lens	19	7	7	5	18	16	28
Nantes	19	8	4	7	22	21	28
PSG	19	7	6	6	28	20	27
Bordeaux	19	7	5	7	22	18	26
Strasbourg	19	7	5	7	23	30	26
Lille	19	6	7	6	19	24	25
Sedan	19	6	4	9	22	27	22
Bastia	19	6	3	10	18	27	21
Rennes	19	5	5	9	18	22	20
Le Havre	19	4	7	8	14	23	19
AC Ajaccio	19	4	6	9	15	24	18
Troyes	19	3	7	9	14	21	16
Montpellier	19	3	7	9	16	26	16

Alain's Corner



Alain Barataud

The Dream Team

The Champions League and the Uefa Cup will break until February next year. It is certainly time for the French team to take a holiday as it had a disastrous week after Lyon, Lens, Bordeaux and Paris Saint Germain all were booted out of the Uefa Cup.

Congratulations to Auxerre who qualified brilliantly against Betis Sevilla after losing away one-nil two weeks ago.

A proud result from Auxerre at home settled the game perfectly as they won two-nil and the right to play Liverpool in February. Well done Mr Roux, you saved the French honour. Good luck against the Reds.

The year has come to an end and the upcoming awards may be no surprise as it looks like Real Madrid players will take home most of the prizes. Ronaldo is favourite as the one who will take it all for his great come back, but I believe Roberto Carlos and Zidane can still upset him as the pick for top awards of FIFA Player of the Year and the France Football Golden Goal.

Who-knows what the jury will decide as the choices are many with Kahn, Ballack, Henry.

For me, the team of the year, my dream team will be: Kahn, Thuram, Nesta, Marquez, Roberto Carlos Ballack, Bouba Diop, Ronaldinho, Zidane, Raul, and Henry.

I will also give special mention to Kahn, Thuram, Zidane, Raul and Henry who are the best players in the world in their positions and it's very difficult to separate Raul and Henry, both on top this year. There's always an outstanding player ahead of them all and this year it is Zidane. Kahn, Thuram, Raul and Henry agree he is a genius.

The team of the year is, of course, Real Madrid as winner of the Champions League, the super European Cup and Intercontinental Cup. Hopefully, they will shine again because we all want to see Madrid and their stars in the top four of the Champions League. We may receive a huge surprise in Spring as they have had a bad beginning in their second round of this competition with only one point after two games.

In France this weekend for Round Nineteen, Marseille, Lyon, Guingamp, Niza and Auxerre are possibilities for the title of Champion of the first round with the advantage to Marseille who played before everybody Saturday night in Sedan. Marseille did the job, winning two-one and producing a very good football, taking the first place for at least twenty-four hours until the four others play their games with some pressure to get a positive result. Of course, none succeeded in getting the right score for the honour of the title as Winter Champion.

Lyon still recovering from their elimination in the Uefa Cup only took a point against Montpellier, while Niza and Guingamp, the two other candidates were thrashed by Monaco and Bordeaux respectively, each four-nil. Auxerre had a slight chance too at the title, but Strasbourg decided to compromise their plan and ended with a good draw.

The games of the week will be Marseille, leader of the pack, against Monaco, one of the top three and a dramatic game for Luis Fernandez, coach of Paris, who can lose his job if his team loses against Bordeaux.

See you next week.



NATIONAL LEAGUE ACTION BETWEEN SYDNEY UNITED AND BRISBANE STRIKERS

